United Nations A/C.1/50/PV.2

General Assembly
Fiftieth Session

Official Records

First Committee

2nd Meeting
Thursday, 12 October 1995, 10 a.m.
New York

Chairman: Mr. Erdenechuluun . . . . . (Mongolia)

The meeting was called to order at 10.35 a.m.

Statement by the Chairman

The Chairman: I should like at the outset to extend a warm welcome to all delegations participating in the First Committee at the fiftieth session of the General Assembly. I also take this opportunity to express my profound appreciation to all Member States for the honour and privilege they have conferred upon me and my country by electing me as Chairman of this body at the current session. I am deeply indebted to all of you for the trust and confidence you have placed in me.

Allow me also to say how much I appreciate the generous words spoken by the representative of Ecuador, Ambassador Luis Valencia Rodriguez, when he nominated me to the post of Chairman of the First Committee. I should like to express on behalf of the entire membership of the Committee, as well as on my own behalf, our congratulations to Ambassador Valencia Rodríguez for the skilful and effective manner in which he presided over our proceedings at the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly.

As I undertake my responsibilities, it is gratifying for me to know that I can count on the cooperation of all members of the Committee as well as on the valuable experience and profound knowledge of the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Mr. Marrack Goulding; the Director of the Centre for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Prvoslav Davinić; and the Secretary of the First Committee, Mr. Sohrab Kheradi, and his colleagues in the Secretariat, who will contribute to the successful completion of our work.

For my part, in keeping with the trust you have placed in me, I intend to discharge my duty with the firm determination to ensure that our work is conducted efficiently and that our endeavours meet with success.

Election of the Vice-Chairman and the Rapporteur

The Chairman: I should like to draw the Committee's attention to the decision of the General Assembly taken at its 1935th meeting on 22 September 1971, concerning the procedure regarding the election of officers of the Main Committees. By the terms of that decision, nominations of candidates should be limited to one statement for each candidate, after which the Committee should immediately proceed to the election. The Committee will follow that procedure today.

Mr. Wrabetz (Austria): Mr. Chairman, first of all, I should like to convey to you our congratulations on your election to guide the First Committee of the General Assembly, and I should like to assure you of the full cooperation of the Austrian delegation.

At the same time, I should like to convey to your predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Luis Valencia Rodríguez, my sincere appreciation of his great efforts and his outstanding role in guiding the work of the First Committee of the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly.

I should like to convey to the Committee, on behalf of its Vice-Chairman at the last session, Mr. Thomas Stelzer, his sincere appreciation of the cooperation and support he received during the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly.

95-86304 (E)

This record contains the original texts of speeches delivered in English and interpretations of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to original speeches only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, Room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

It is now my honour to propose the candidacy of His Excellency Mr. Antonio de Icaza of Mexico for the post of Vice-Chairman of the First Committee of the fiftieth session of the General Assembly. Ambassador de Icaza is a distinguished diplomat. His outstanding experience and his diplomatic skills are widely known and appreciated. His former assignments included posts as Ambassador to Nicaragua, El Salvador, Egypt, Brazil and Venezuela, and he served as Deputy Foreign Minister of his country, Mexico. In 1995 Mr. de Icaza assumed his current position as Permanent Representative of Mexico to the Geneva Conference on Disarmament.

It is my sincere conviction that because of his past experience and diplomatic skills, Ambassador de Icaza will be an excellent Vice-Chairman of the First Committee, and I therefore propose that Ambassador de Icaza be elected Vice-Chairman of the First Committee by acclamation.

The Chairman: I thank the representative of Austria for his statement nominating Ambassador Antonio de Icaza of Mexico for the post of Vice-Chairman. I wish to convey, through him, the Committee's sincere appreciation to Mr. Thomas Stelzer for his valuable contribution to the work of the First Committee in his capacity as Vice-Chairman at the forty-ninth session.

There being no other nomination, I take it that, in accordance with rule 103 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly and with established practice, the Committee wishes to dispense with the secret ballot and declare Ambassador Antonio de Icaza of Mexico elected Vice-Chairman of the First Committee by acclamation.

It was so decided.

The Chairman: I wish to convey to Ambassador Antonio de Icaza, through the representative of Mexico, my warmest congratulations on the distinction that has been conferred upon him and to assure him of my confidence that we shall cooperate in a harmonious manner so that we can jointly discharge the responsibilities incumbent upon us.

I now call upon the representative of Japan.

Mr. Ogawa (Japan): At the outset, I should like to congratulate you, Sir, on your well-deserved election to the chairmanship of this important Committee. The congratulations of the delegation of Japan will be extended to you at an appropriate time in the course of the current session.

On behalf of Ambassador Tanaka, Vice-Chairman of the First Committee during its forty-ninth session, I am pleased and honoured to nominate Ambassador Wolfgang Hoffmann of Germany for the post of Vice-Chairman of the First Committee at the fiftieth session of the General Assembly. I wish to refer briefly to his long diplomatic career. After entering the German Foreign Service, Ambassador Hoffmann served in many posts overseas, including posts in New York, Ankara, Vienna and London, and in 1993 he assumed the post of head of the German delegation to the Conference on Disarmament at Geneva. In his present function as head of the German delegation he has presided over many important committees relating to various disarmament issues.

My delegation is fully convinced that Ambassador Hoffmann's extensive experience will make an essential contribution to the success of our work at this memorable session of the General Assembly. I would therefore recommend to the Committee his election as a Vice-Chairman of the First Committee at the fiftieth session of the General Assembly by acclamation.

The Chairman: I thank the representative of Japan for his statement nominating Ambassador Wolfgang Hoffmann of Germany for a post of Vice-Chairman. Through him, I wish to convey to Ambassador Yoshitomo Tanaka the Committee's appreciation for the distinction with which he carried out his duties and for his valuable contribution to the work of the Committee last year as Vice-Chairman.

There being no other nomination, I shall take it that in this instance also the Committee wishes to dispense with the secret ballot and to declare Ambassador Wolfgang Hoffmann of Germany elected Vice-Chairman of the First Committee by acclamation.

It was so decided.

The Chairman: I wish to express my warmest congratulations to Ambassador Wolfgang Hoffmann on his election as Vice-Chairman of the First Committee and assure him of my confidence that we shall jointly discharge the important responsibilities incumbent upon us.

I now call upon the representative of South Africa.

Mr. Bergh (South Africa): Mr. Chairman, please accept our congratulations on your assumption of the office of Chairman of the First Committee. You can count on the cooperation and the support of the South African delegation during the course of our forthcoming deliberations.

At the outset, may I extend Mr. Peter Goosen's apologies for not being able to be present here today to make the nomination for Rapporteur. Since the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly, Mr. Goosen has been reassigned to our Permanent Mission in Geneva, and while he will be attending this session of the First Committee, he will not be able to be here before the weekend. I am therefore reading a statement, on his behalf, for the nomination of the Rapporteur. His statement reads as follows:

> "The delegation of the Republic of South Africa has the honour to nominate Mr. Rajab Sukayri for the office of Rapporteur of the First Committee. Mr. Sukayri, who is currently Minister Plenipotentiary of the Mission of Jordan to the United Nations in New York, is eminently qualified for the post of Rapporteur of the First Committee. He is working on a doctoral dissertation, the subject of which is nuclear-weapon-free zones, through Queen's University in Canada. Mr. Sukayri also has a Master's degree in political science from Carlton University in Canada and a Bachelor's degree in business administration from the University of Jordan at Amman. Mr. Sukayri joined his country's foreign service in 1974, and in 1993 he was accepted as one of the United Nations Disarmament Fellows. He has widespread experience in the field of disarmament.
>
> "The South African delegation consequently has great pleasure in nominating Mr. Sukayri for election to the important post of Rapporteur of the First Committee at the fiftieth session of the United Nations General Assembly."

The Chairman: I thank the representative of South Africa for the nomination of Mr. Rajab Sukayri of Jordan for election to the post of Rapporteur of the First Committee.

Through him, I wish to convey to Mr. Peter Goosen the Committee's appreciation for the important contribution that he made to the work of the First Committee during the forty-ninth session as Rapporteur of the First Committee.

Members of the First Committee have just heard the representative of South Africa nominate Mr. Sukayri for the post of Rapporteur. As there are no other nominations, I shall take it that the Committee wishes to follow the same procedure as before and dispense with the secret ballot and declare Mr. Sukayri elected Rapporteur of the First Committee by acclamation.

It was so decided.

The Chairman: I wish to express my cordial congratulations to the representative of Jordan on his election as Rapporteur of the First Committee, and I invite him now to take the place reserved for him.

May I now draw the attention of members to rule 110 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, which reads as follows:

> "Congratulations to the officers of a Main Committee shall not be expressed except by the Chairman of the previous session — or, in his absence, by a member of his delegation — after all the officers of the Committee have been elected."

I hope that this rule will be applied and respected today and in the future, and I shall be personally grateful to delegations if they could also dispense with that customary passage at the beginning of their statements.

I now have the pleasure of calling upon the representative of Ecuador, Ambassador Luis Valencia Rodríguez, Chairman of the First Committee at the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly.

Mr. Valencia Rodríguez (Ecuador) (*interpretation from Spanish*): Mr. Chairman, I wish to comply with the obligation set forth in article 110 of the rules of procedure to which you referred, and I do so, may I say, not because it is laid down in the rules but because it affords me a welcome opportunity to convey to you, my friend and Chairman of this Committee on Disarmament and International Security, my most heartfelt congratulations. Let me add that we feel deeply gratified that you, with your long experience of the issues within the purview of the First Committee, should be presiding over our work, and we feel sure that you will lead us to the positive results that all of us expect from this fiftieth session, as we take stock of the 50 years of life of the United Nations.

Let me also extend my most heartfelt congratulations to Ambassador Antonio de Icaza of Mexico and to Ambassador Wolfgang Hoffmann of Germany, as well as to Mr. Sukayri of Jordan, who have been elected to the posts of Vice-Chairman and Rapporteur, respectively. Thanks to the diplomatic skill and ability so characteristic of them, the First Committee has a team of officers made up of able and dynamic men, and we feel sure that their efforts will prove decisive as we pursue the success that should culminate our task.

We know that the items before the Committee refer to central concerns such as peace, disarmament and international security, matters that affect the very survival of mankind. These have been considered from the very origins of the United Nations and while substantial progress has been made much still remains to be done to reach the goals we have set.

Convinced as we are of the great difficulties that we must overcome we would like to extend to you, Sir, and to the other members of the Bureau, from the very start of our activities, our fullest and most sincere cooperation.

Finally, allow me to express my deep appreciation of the kind words that have been spoken about my work as Chairman of the Committee during the forty-ninth session. I also extend these thanks to the representative of Austria.

The Chairman: On behalf of the officers of the Committee, as well as on my own behalf, I thank most deeply the representative of Ecuador, Ambassador Luis Valencia Rodriguez, a good friend of mine, for his kind and generous words addressed to the Vice-Chairmen, the Rapporteur and myself. I shall indeed depend on his valuable cooperation and advice in the discharge of my responsibilities.

I now call on the representative of Mexico, Mr. Pablo Macedo.

Mr. Macedo (Mexico) (*interpretation from Spanish*): On behalf of the Mexican delegation I should like very warmly to express thanks first for the very generous words of the representative of Austria, and especially express thanks for the confidence that the members of the First Committee have placed in Ambassador de Icaza by electing him by acclamation to the vice-chairmanship. The Committee may be sure that Ambassador de Icaza will exert his best efforts to contribute to the success of our work.

The Chairman: I fully reciprocate the sentiments the representative of Mexico has just expressed.

I now call on the representative of Germany, Ambassador Hoffmann, who has also been elected a Vice-Chairman of the First Committee.

Mr. Hoffmann (Germany): I dare not congratulate you, Sir, after what you said earlier, but may I say that I am looking forward to working with you.

I should like to thank the Committee for electing me and to thank my Japanese colleagues for proposing me. We know that this fiftieth anniversary session of the United Nations is a very special one and I am sure we will all do our utmost to make this a very successful Committee. I will do my level best to contribute to this endeavour.

The Chairman: I am looking forward to working with the representative of Germany, Ambassador Hoffmann, as Vice-Chairman, and to his valuable assistance and cooperation in the discharge of my duties.

I now call on the representative of Jordan, Mr. Rajab Sukayri, the Committee's Rapporteur.

Mr. Sukayri (Jordan), Rapporteur of the First Committee: I should like to take this opportunity to thank you very much for congratulating me on my appointment as Rapporteur of the Committee. I should also like to thank my colleagues in the Bureau and wish them every success in their endeavours.

Having represented my country, Jordan, in this Committee for a few years, it is indeed a great honour for me personally to assume the post of Rapporteur, especially when this appointment comes at a time when the United Nations is celebrating its fiftieth anniversary. My country, Jordan, and I personally have always attached great importance to the work of the Committee. While all General Assembly items are of significance, I share the belief that the agenda of the First Committee is the most prominent and enjoys a remarkable priority for all States Members of the United Nations.

On behalf of my delegation I wish to take this opportunity to express my deep gratitude to the members of the Asian Group, who endorsed my candidature for the post of Rapporteur of the Committee. I should also like to express my sincere appreciation to my dear colleague Mr. Bergh from South Africa, who nominated me on behalf of Mr. Goosen, last year's Rapporteur of the Committee.

I should also like to thank all the members of the Secretariat, but especially Mr. Kheradi, the Secretary of the First Committee, and Mr. Sattar.

Finally, I wish to thank all members of the Committee and assure them of my fullest cooperation.

The Chairman: I am certain that I express not only my own feelings but also those of all the members of the Committee when I say that we are sure that with his close

cooperation the work of the First Committee will be successful.

Having elected the officers, the Committee has concluded its consideration of the first item on its agenda.

Organization of work

The Chairman: I draw the attention of members of the Committee to document A/C.1/50/1 of 25 September 1995 containing a letter dated 22 September 1995 addressed to me by the President of the General Assembly informing me that the General Assembly at its third plenary meeting had decided to allocate 25 items to the First Committee for its consideration, namely agenda items 57 to 81 inclusive.

Before I proceed to provide the Committee with detailed information on the programme of work and timetable proposed, I should like to present some preliminary comments for the Committee's consideration.

As members are aware, in accordance with precedent I have undertaken consultations in New York with individual delegations and groups of delegations to facilitate an agreement on the programme of work and timetable, of course on an *ad referendum* basis. It may perhaps also be pertinent to indicate that although the purpose and scope of my discussions were mainly to cover the organizational aspects, considerable attention was also focused on substantive matters. I should like to indicate that this has indeed proved to be of great assistance in enabling me to put certain matters in proper perspective at the outset as we proceed to plan and organize our task at the fiftieth session of the General Assembly.

Members will also recall that, in accordance with established practice, the First Committee begins its substantive work only after the conclusion of the general debate in the plenary meetings of the General Assembly. Furthermore, the General Assembly at its 3rd plenary meeting, on 22 September 1995, decided, on the recommendation of the General Committee, that all Main Committees should make every effort to complete their work by Friday, 1 December 1995. Taking this into account we should organize our programme in such a manner as to complete the work of the First Committee before the aforementioned closing date fixed by the General Assembly for all Main Committees.

The time-frame within which the First Committee will need to complete its substantive work, namely the period extending from 16 October to 22 November, has emerged logically and rather inevitably from the developments and consideration to which I have just referred.

At this stage, I should like to point out that last year the Committee utilized a total of 26 formal meetings and 8 informal meetings, and that in spite of the limitations, the First Committee was able to conclude its work successfully on Tuesday, 22 November — one day before the Thanksgiving holiday.

Accordingly, I believe that if we make a concerted and sincere effort to utilize our time in an effective and efficient manner, we can surely accomplish our task without any undue difficulties.

Turning now to the specifics of the Committee's organization of work, I wish to inform members that, on the basis of the extensive consultations held to date, we have arrived at the proposed programme of work and timetable contained in document A/C.1/50/2, which was considered and accepted *ad referendum* at the informal meeting of the Committee held on Tuesday, 10 October. I hope the Committee will be in a position to approve it today. In arriving at this proposal, I have been guided by past practice and precedents that have evolved during recent years, which I believe have enabled the First Committee to conduct its work in a smooth and efficient manner. Accordingly, members will observe that the consideration of items is divided into two phases: first, those items dealing with disarmament and international security — agenda items 57 to 78, and 80 and 81; and secondly, agenda item 79, relating to "Rationalization of the work and reform of the agenda of the First Committee".

Furthermore, I should like to indicate that, owing to the large number of items and the complexity of the issues involved, there is a further demarcation into specific stages separating the short general debate from structured informal discussion of specific subjects on the adopted thematic approach on those items, and from the consideration of, and action on, draft resolutions under those items. In addition, as in the past, precise deadlines have been introduced with respect to the submission of draft resolutions under the items in the two groupings.

I should like to emphasize that, wherever possible, I have set deadlines at the earliest possible stage in order to allow sufficient time for delegations to undertake the necessary consultations before the Committee proceeds to consider and to take action on the draft resolutions.

As indicated in the programme of work and timetable, the First Committee will begin its substantive work on Monday, 16 October, by holding a short general debate on all disarmament and international security agenda items: items 57 to 78, and 80 and 81. A total of 10 meetings — from Monday, 16 October, to Friday, 20 October, and on Wednesday, 25 October, and Thursday, 26 October — will be allocated for this stage of the work of the Committee.

In this connection, I should like to urge delegations to kindly limit the time for delivery of their statements, if at all possible, to 10 minutes in order to enable all those delegations wishing to participate in the general debate to do so within the short time allocated for that purpose.

I should like also to invite those delegations wishing to participate in the general debate to kindly inscribe their names on the list of speakers as soon as possible in order to enable the Committee to fully and constructively utilize the time and conference facilities available to it. Moreover, it should be noted that the deadline for the closure of the list of speakers for the general debate on all disarmament and international security agenda items will be Monday, 16 October, at 6 p.m.

As reflected in the programme of work and timetable, the First Committee's meeting on Friday, 27 October, will be devoted to a special meeting in observance of Disarmament Week.

From Monday, 30 October, to Friday, 3 November, the First Committee will hold informal structured discussions on specific subjects on the adopted thematic approach on disarmament and international security agenda items. A total of seven meetings will be set aside for this phase of the work of the Committee. In this connection, I should like to inform members that I and the Officers of the Committee, with the assistance and cooperation of the Secretariat, will provide the necessary information to members of the Committee well in advance regarding each subject and the time allocated for its consideration.

The deadline for submission of draft resolutions on all disarmament and international security agenda items would be Friday, 3 November, at 6 p.m. It is my intention to request the cooperation of members in adhering strictly to that deadline. Delegations are strongly encouraged to submit and introduce their draft resolutions as early as possible. Furthermore, it is imperative that delegations submit those draft resolutions that could entail programme budget implications as early as possible in order to enable the Secretariat to prepare the necessary statement of programme budget implications on time and also to enable the Committee to take action upon them with a view to meeting the mandatory deadline required for their submission to the Fifth Committee of the General Assembly. In this connection, I should like to state that the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and the Fifth Committee need adequate time to review the programme budget implications of a draft resolution before the draft resolution can be acted upon by the Assembly.

On Monday, 6 November, the First Committee will hold an exchange of views on agenda item 79, entitled "Rationalization of the work and reform of the agenda of the First Committee", and a total of two meetings will be devoted for that purpose. The deadline for submission of draft resolutions on agenda item 79 will be Tuesday, 7 November, at 6 p.m.

With regard to the next phase of our work, a period from Tuesday, 7 November, to Friday, 10 November, will be allocated for the consideration of all draft resolutions submitted under agenda items 57 to 81. A total of five meetings will be allocated for this phase of our work.

Finally, during the period from Monday, 13 November, to Wednesday, 22 November, the Committee will proceed to take action on all draft resolutions submitted under disarmament and international security agenda items, including item 79, related to the question of the rationalization of the work and reform of the agenda of the First Committee. A total of 10 meetings will be at the disposal of the Committee for that phase of its work.

In this connection, I should like to indicate that it is my intention to retain at the fiftieth session of the General Assembly, as was the practice at previous sessions, the voting procedure of grouping draft resolutions by clusters, and I shall present specific proposals concerning this in due course.

On the basis of the proposed programme of work and timetable that I have just briefly outlined, the First Committee should be able to dispose of all the agenda items allocated to it within the time-frame to which I have referred.

It is my earnest hope that this programme of work, which was arrived at after due consultations and following past precedents, meets with the approval of the members of the Committee.

If I hear no objection, I shall take it that the First Committee adopts the programme of work and timetable contained in document A/C.1/50/2.

It was so decided.

The Chairman: I should now like to draw the attention of the members of the Committee to the relevant rules and recommendations of the General Assembly affecting the work of the Main Committees, including those contained in General Assembly decision 34/401.

In order to utilize fully the time and conference facilities made available to the Committee, I should like, with your cooperation, to convene the meetings of the Committee at 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. sharp, and I shall similarly adjourn the meetings at 1 p.m. and 6 p.m., respectively. Allow me to emphasize strongly the utmost importance of punctuality in the interest of ensuring the effective and orderly organization of our work and achieving economies for the world body.

At the same time, I wish to point out that I shall convene meetings of the Committee only if there are a sufficient number of speakers inscribed on the list of speakers to address the Committee, so that we may be able to make full use of the time and resources available in the most efficient and effective manner. I should like to add that the resources allocated to a meeting cancelled at an appropriate time may be released to other meetings held within or outside the framework of the First Committee.

I now call upon the Deputy Secretary of the First Committee, who wishes to make a short statement.

Mr. Sattar (Deputy Secretary of the Committee): I should like, with the indulgence of the members of the Committee, to draw the Committee's attention to the following additional points.

I should like to draw the attention of representatives to the fact that the General Assembly has again decided to depart at this session from the rule that one quarter of the members must be present before a meeting of a Main Committee may be declared open and debate permitted to proceed. The General Assembly made this recommendation on the understanding that such a departure from the rules did not involve any permanent change in the relevant provision of rule 108 of the rules of procedure pertaining to a quorum for the opening of meetings, whereby a majority of members must be present for any decision to be taken.

As indicated in the programme of work and timetable, the list of speakers for the general debate on all disarmament and international security agenda items will be closed on Monday, 16 October, at 6 p.m. Several delegations have already indicated their intention to participate in the general debate, and the Secretariat has taken note of those requests. In order to enable the Committee to make full use of the time and conference facilities available to it, all delegations are kindly requested to inscribe their names on the list of speakers at their earliest convenience.

As you, Mr. Chairman, noted in your statement, members of the Committee are requested to submit draft resolutions, especially those draft resolutions with programme budget implications, as far in advance as possible in order to allow sufficient time for the preparation by the Secretariat of the estimate of expenditure and for its consideration by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and the Fifth Committee of the General Assembly, as well as to provide enough time for consultations. That would undoubtedly facilitate the Secretariat's task in processing the draft resolutions in order to make them available to the Committee as soon as possible.

In this connection I would request members of the Committee to note that draft resolutions and amendments, and the names of sponsors thereof, should be submitted to the secretariat of the Committee in writing to ensure accuracy and avoid any possible misunderstanding. Requests for the use of conference rooms for group meetings should also be submitted in writing as early as possible so that the necessary arrangements may be made in time.

I should like to draw the attention of all members of the Committee to General Assembly decision 34/401, particularly its provisions dealing with explanations of vote and the right of reply, namely, paragraphs 6, 7 and 8 of that decision, which pertain to those particular issues.

I should also like to draw the Committee's attention to document A/C.1/50/INF.1, which will be issued within a few days. That document will list, for the purpose of information and ready reference, all documents before the First Committee issued as of 9 October 1995. That list will be updated as appropriate.

I would ask delegations to be so kind as to submit to the Secretariat as soon as possible the list of members of their delegation to the First Committee in order to enable

the Secretariat to circulate the Committee's membership list at as early a stage of the session as possible.

Delegations are requested to provide the conference officers with a minimum of 60 copies of all prepared statements for conference-servicing purposes. These, I would like to point out, are in addition to the copies required for any necessary general distribution among delegations.

I would like to inform members of the Committee that the United Nations Centre for Disarmament Affairs will be hosting a workshop entitled "Micro-Disarmament: The new agenda for disarmament and arms control" on Wednesday, 8 November, from 3.30 to 6 p.m. in the Dag Hammarskjold Library Auditorium. Topics to be discussed will include the collection of light weapons in internal-conflict situations; disarming and demobilizing ex-combatants and methods and means to prevent the transfer of surplus weapons. Speakers will be from the Centre for Disarmament Affairs and research institutes affiliated with the Centre. All delegations are invited to participate in this event.

Finally, I should like to give you, Mr. Chairman, as well as the other officers of the Committee and all delegations, the firmest assurances of the support and cooperation of the secretariat of the First Committee and, of course, of the Department of Political Affairs and Centre for Disarmament Affairs.

The Chairman: If no delegation wishes to make any comments or remarks at this stage, I propose to adjourn the meeting now. As decided, the Committee will begin its substantive work on Monday, 16 October, at 10 a.m. sharp.

The meeting rose at 11.20 a.m.

United Nations A/C.1/50/PV.3

General Assembly
Fiftieth Session

Official Records

First Committee
3rd Meeting
Monday, 16 October 1995, 10 a.m.
New York

Chairman: Mr. Erdenechuluun ..... (Mongolia)

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Statement by the Chairman

The Chairman: This morning, in accordance with its programme of work and timetable, the Committee will begin its general debate on all disarmament and international security agenda items. Permit me first, however, to say a few words as presiding officer of the First Committee.

The United Nations came into being half a century ago in the wake of the most devastating war in the history of humankind. The establishment of the world Organization coincided with the unleashing of the power of the atom, which revealed a new vista of seemingly unlimited potential for human betterment but at the same time provided a tool for developing the most destructive weapons ever known to humankind. The atomic explosions over Hiroshima and Nagasaki 50 years ago are a stark reminder of the danger which these weapons pose to world civilization and a constant stimulus to the strengthening of our resolve to abolish these horrendous means of destruction.

Surely it is more than mere symbolism that the very first resolution adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations at its first session, on 24 January 1946, was devoted to limiting the use of atomic energy to peaceful purposes, and to eliminating from national arsenals atomic weapons and all other major weapons adaptable to mass destruction. Even at that early hour, the representatives gathered there sensed that a new approach to security was needed in order to survive in this new age. I would venture to say that, in an as-yet-unformed consciousness, humanity sensed the urgent need for fundamental change.

But this nascent yearning for change was swept aside by the mutual distrust and suspicion of the cold war. The arms race which fed the cold war precluded serious consideration of new security concepts, despite the tremendous efforts exerted by the United Nations and, indeed, by the entire international community.

Nevertheless, one cannot fail to recognize the significance of steps taken on a bilateral and multilateral basis even during the years of the cold-war era. The realization of the potential dangers of the proliferation of nuclear weapons, of their harmful short- and long-term effects on the environment, as well as the attainment of strategic equivalence between the two super-Powers made it possible to reach agreements which have helped to avert some of the most extravagant excesses of the arms race.

The United Nations has been instrumental in taking steps towards achieving fundamental objectives. At a time when over one hundred atmospheric tests were being conducted each year, the partial test-ban Treaty of 1963 provided a dose of environmental sanity. When the spectre of the "nth" nuclear-weapon State loomed on the horizon, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) of 1968 provided an alternative. As science opened up the possibility of new, more terrifying species of germ and poison, the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction (BWC), of 1972, and the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction, of 1993, closed the doors to these horrors.

95-86328 (E)

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The United Nations also stimulated and supported the innovative creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones — in 1967, the Treaty of Tlatelolco for Latin America and the Caribbean; in 1986, the Treaty of Rarotonga for the South Pacific; and the forthcoming treaty for Africa.

All these efforts and achievements were promoted by holding three special sessions of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, the most important being the first, held in 1978, which adopted a Final Document containing a Declaration of Principles and a Programme of Action leading to the goal of general and complete disarmament, as well as the machinery to implement them. Thus, the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament is regarded by many as a charter for disarmament that also has validity to this day.

The end of the cold war has freed the world from the strains of ideological confrontation, opening up fresh avenues for the adoption of far-reaching measures aimed at eliminating nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction.

Indeed, the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations has of late been highlighted by a number of positive developments in the field of disarmament. The indefinite extension of the NPT; the successful outcome of the Special Conference on the Biological Weapons Convention; the Review Conference of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, which has just concluded; and the accelerated pace of negotiations on a truly comprehensive test-ban treaty are but a few examples of the impressive progress being made.

The really burning question is, "Can this progress be sustained?" Unfortunately, the mere asking of the question by non-nuclear-weapon States smacks of ingratitude to the nuclear-weapon States. It seems to cast doubt on their good faith at the very moment when they are most amply demonstrating it. Unfortunately again, the expectation on the part of the nuclear-weapon States that the non-nuclear-weapon States should trust explicitly in their future behaviour is what makes the non-nuclear-weapon States uneasy. The non-nuclear-weapon States find it hard to believe that five decades of reliance upon nuclear weaponry cannot but have a retarding effect.

These emotions and more were felt as a powerful undercurrent at the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). It is a testimony to the skill and dedication of the many hundred delegates that those waters were safely navigated. For all its ups and downs, the NPT Conference adopted decisions which will undoubtedly have a significant and lasting impact on the entire disarmament process.

It is to be hoped that the interlinked decisions on the principles and objectives for non-proliferation and disarmament, on the strengthening of the process for review of the Treaty and on the indefinite extension will constitute a proper basis for the future effective and comprehensive implementation of all the provisions of the NPT. Furthermore, it may be said with a sufficient degree of confidence that a foundation has been laid for the strengthening of the worldwide network of non-proliferation regimes, be it weapons of mass destruction or conventional weapons. As a result, I believe the existing non-proliferation regimes and the setting up of new ones deserve the most careful and innovative approach by the First Committee in its deliberations.

On the other hand, the undercurrents continued to churn. Each nuclear explosion since the NPT Conference has only stirred them more. This session, I am afraid, will not be immune to sharp debate on this matter. I only ask that the debate always be moderated by a sincere desire to find our way to that common ground that gives us a mooring against the dangerous undertow. Even at the risk of redundancy, let us be unequivocal in our praise of agreements well met and the need for more of the same in the years to come. Let neither complacency nor cynicism jeopardize the promise of more progress or cloud the vision of a nuclear-weapon-free world.

In this spirit, this session of the General Assembly can be intensive and, I hope, fulfilling, for we have to address ourselves to the most pressing issues of disarmament in a fundamentally new security environment. But let us have no illusions: we are not the first gathering since the end of the cold war. The conceptual changes that ought to have accompanied the founding of the United Nations are still not fully formed and have not yet taken root, despite the new possibilities. If in our deliberation here we can nurture the emergence and acceptance of just a few innovations in disarmament and international security, we should take some satisfaction in our efforts. Other sessions and other forums will benefit from our labours, and let us hope to develop them further.

The intensive work of the Ad Hoc Committee of the Conference on Disarmament on a nuclear-test ban, substantial contributions to the elaboration of the rolling text made by States participating in those negotiations, the recent statement by President Clinton that the United States

would indefinitely stop all testing and work at the Conference on Disarmament towards the speediest conclusion of the comprehensive test-ban treaty with a zero-yield ban and relevant statements by President Yeltsin, as well as by France and the United Kingdom, create the necessary preconditions for the successful outcome of the negotiations on this issue. It is imperative that 1995, the date to which all nuclear-weapon Powers have committed themselves, will witness the actual conclusion of the treaty. Needless to say, the observers of moratoriums on testing by all nuclear-weapon States would give a positive impetus to those negotiations and be most welcomed by the international community. Actions to the contrary, however, will seriously undermine the confidence placed in the nuclear-weapon States, which have recently undertaken, at the NPT Conference, a commitment to exercise utmost restraint pending the entry into force of the comprehensive test-ban treaty. Consequently, I hope that the Committee will continue to lend its strong support to the activities of the Conference on Disarmament on this critical issue.

A cut-off in the production of fissionable material for weapons was the second measure of nuclear disarmament mentioned in the decision on Principles and Objectives at the NPT Review and Extension Conference. With the decision of President Clinton and President Yeltsin completely to close down weapon-grade-uranium production facilities and drastically to cut down plutonium-reprocessing operations, the problem of cut-off has acquired a new perspective. Unfortunately, the Conference on Disarmament was unable to make progress on this issue. It will therefore command closer attention at this session of the General Assembly as the need to conclude a treaty on this subject has become even more urgent in recent years following disturbing reports of incidents involving the alleged international smuggling of fissile materials.

The third issue of nuclear disarmament mentioned in the decision on Principles and Objectives is the determined pursuit by the nuclear-weapon States of systematic and progressive efforts to reduce nuclear weapons globally with the ultimate goal of their elimination. Despite some efforts on this item in both the United Nations Disarmament Commission and the Conference on Disarmament, we still do not have a clear picture of when reduction of forces will incorporate all five nuclear Powers or how those efforts will become systematized.

The issue of security assurances has clearly moved to the forefront of disarmament dialogue, especially in conjunction with the NPT Review and Extension Conference. An important step forward has been made with the decision of the Conference to the effect that

> "further steps should be considered to assure non nuclear-weapon States party to the Treaty against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. These steps could take the form of an internationally legally binding instrument." *(NPT/CONF.1995/L.5, para. 8)*

The First Committee may wish to consider giving further impetus to that statement.

In addition to the NPT, the comprehensive test-ban treaty and other measures of nuclear disarmament and security assurances, the problem of the creation of additional nuclear-weapon-free zones, which has received further momentum with the final text of a treaty on an African nuclear-weapon-free zone, is emerging as one of the key elements in the mathematics of the security equation.

No less important to our Committee's work are the items concerning the elimination of other weapons of mass destruction. As part of ongoing efforts to strengthen the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction, the Ad Hoc Group of Governmental Experts has been actively exploring ways to strengthen compliance with the Convention and develop an effective verification mechanism. That work is to be commended. At the same time, the members parties to the Convention are urged to encourage the Ad Hoc Group to meet its goals prior to the fourth Review Conference on bacteriological weapons, which is to take place some time in 1996.

Not so long ago the international community rejoiced at the successful outcome of long and tedious negotiations on banning chemical weapons. The signing of the Convention in this regard in January 1993 undoubtedly became one of the most important and significant events on the disarmament landscape. Some 37 countries have already ratified the Convention, and let me express my sincere hope that many more will do so in the near future so that it can enter into force at an early date. It would, of course, be most appropriate if those States that are intending to declare stockpiles of chemical weapons were to be among the 65 bringing the Convention into force.

Over the past few years certain aspects of conventional disarmament have been under active scrutiny in the First Committee. A main focus was on international arms

transfers, with special emphasis on illicit trafficking in arms. In this connection the work done by the Disarmament Commission, during its 1995 session, on the issue of arms transfers is to be commended. I believe that the progress, made especially in regard to the scope and structure of the document, lays a sound basis for the successful conclusion of the work next year.

Another issue that is attracting increasing attention is that of the proliferation and excessive accumulation of small arms in many countries. It is of significance that steps are being taken to study ways and means of curbing the illicit circulation of small arms and ensuring their collection and reduction in number.

Despite the fact that the Group of Governmental Experts was unable to agree on the expansion of the United Nations Register and despite the slow progress made in the Conference on Disarmament, renewed efforts on this issue are urgently called for at all levels, including that of the First Committee.

An increasingly indiscriminate use of land-mines, in particular anti-personnel land-mines, has prompted action at the multilateral, regional and unilateral levels. Although it is regrettable that the Review Conference on certain conventional weapons, just concluded in Vienna, was unable to reach agreement on all aspects of this urgent issue, nevertheless, given the complexity and importance of the subject-matter, the States parties to the Convention have decided to continue their work next year with a view to resolving the outstanding issues. In addition, we note with great satisfaction that a very important breakthrough was achieved with the adoption of an additional Protocol to the Convention, namely, Protocol IV on blinding laser weapons.

The traditional disarmament menu of the past decade — compliance, verification, science and technology, the prevention of an arms race in outer space and other items — will undergo little, if any, change. But it is safe to assume that these issues stand to benefit from the overall positive trends and from the attention given to them here.

Within the ambit of disarmament issues I wish to touch briefly on the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Regional Centres dealing with peace and disarmament in Africa, Asia and the Pacific, and in Latin America and the Caribbean (A/50/380). It is distressing to note that at a time when unparalleled opportunities are unfolding, the regional centres, as emphasized in the report,

> "remain unable to function in the manner intended by the General Assembly because of inadequate financial resources". *(A/50/380, para. 5)*

It is my earnest hope that delegations, especially those of the regions concerned, will give serious consideration to that matter, so that appropriate action could be taken by the Committee at this session.

The Committee will also be considering three agenda items related to international security: "Review of the implementation of the Declaration on the Strengthening of International Security"; "Strengthening of security and cooperation in the Mediterranean region"; and "Maintenance of international security". In this context, I should like to state that, in the past, the results of the Committee's deliberations have been, for many reasons, rather modest and usually of a general nature. The time was not ripe for applying a businesslike approach to the questions of international security.

The political atmosphere, however, has changed, and the proceedings of the present session of the General Assembly prove that the international community has already taken a more realistic approach in this regard. A growing interest in introducing appropriate confidence- and security-building measures in various regions is moving the world gradually towards greater openness and transparency.

It has been generally recognized that the United Nations should enhance its effectiveness in fulfilling its main responsibility for maintaining international peace and security. There is also a prevailing conviction that a mechanism should be developed to allow the United Nations and its Security Council to prevent and discourage aggression, effectively control the build-up of arms, and deal with humanitarian and ecological problems spawned by armed conflicts.

During the debate in the General Assembly, a great number of proposals were put forward concerning a new concept of international security and the ways and means of making the United Nations stronger, more effective and more relevant to the challenges that the international community is confronted with. It is my belief that the First Committee has the necessary potential to consider all the proposals in a spirit of cooperation and with the willingness to make the best use of them for the benefit of the international community and of the United Nations.

I was delighted to learn that the 1995 Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to Professor Joseph Rotblat and the

Pugwash Conferences on Science and World Affairs, which Professor Rotblat founded and of which he is the President. The Pugwash Conferences, a non-governmental organization that has consultative status with the United Nations, was founded, *inter alia*, to promote the ideas of the Russell-Einstein Manifesto. That Manifesto was issued in London on 9 July 1955 by Bertrand Russell and Albert Einstein and signed by 11 international scientists from East and West, of which Professor Rotblat is the sole survivor. The aims of the Manifesto and the Pugwash Movement are the elimination of the nuclear threat and the abolition of war. For 40 years the Pugwash Movement of scientists has been dedicated to disarmament and international security. As Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali and all his predecessors since U Thant have noted, the aims of the Pugwash Movement are similar to those of the United Nations.

In this connection, I should like to commend very highly the increasing contribution of non-governmental organizations in recent years to the work of the United Nations. These organizations, with sincerity and dedication and with a sense of morality and justice, play an indispensable role in drawing our attention to acute issues that deserve timely consideration and resolute action. I wish to thank them for their active interest in our work and to encourage them to expand their efforts in the field of disarmament and international security.

May I take a moment to mention the presence here with us of a group of young diplomats from 30 countries from all the regions of the world, who are participating in the annual disarmament fellowship programme. Their exposure to our proceedings will be valuable, especially at this crucial time when the world is experiencing great political, economic, social and environmental challenges. We wish them a stimulating and productive stay in New York.

Although there is a sense of urgency to find solutions to the multiplicity of outstanding issues, the path will be difficult for the First Committee. It will take hard work and, most of all, a great deal of mutual trust and cooperation between us in order to achieve steady progress in this work. With the support and active cooperation of Committee members, I am certain that the First Committee of the General Assembly, at this historic fiftieth session, will be able to further contribute substantially towards attaining our common objective — a world free of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction and with a greatly reduced level of conventional weapons and of violence in general.

Statement by the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs

The Chairman: I now have the pleasure and honour to welcome Mr. Marrack Goulding, the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, to the First Committee, and I call on him.

Mr. Goulding (Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs): Let me begin by congratulating you, Sir, on your election to preside over this very significant session of the First Committee. It is a session that is significant, not only because it comes at a time of great potential in the field of arms control and disarmament, but also because it coincides with the fiftieth anniversary of this Organization. Your diplomatic skills and long experience in the field of disarmament and international security guarantee you success in guiding the Committee's work to fruitful results. Let me also thank you for the honour of inviting me to address the Committee immediately after the very thoughtful and important statement which you have just made, though I have to confess that I cannot help wondering how much you have left for lesser orators to say.

The events of the last 12 months have confirmed yet again that disarmament cannot be pursued in isolation from broader concerns of international security and that these broader concerns are themselves inextricably linked to economic and social issues. Another trend that has been confirmed is that internal conflicts are becoming the norm and inter-State conflicts are becoming comparatively rare.

These trends have had two effects on the Secretary-General's approach to his responsibilities in the field of peace and security. First, he is more and more convinced that you cannot tackle the issues of conflict without tackling the issues of economic and social development, or vice versa. Secondly, he thinks that more attention should be given to efforts to control the weapon systems which are actually killing people — and killing people in tens of thousands — in internal conflicts. Of course, the international community must continue to strive for further progress in preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, but it also needs to work harder to prevent proliferation in the conventional field.

The last year has also confirmed that, generally speaking, the greatest beneficiaries of the improved state of international relations in the post-cold war era are the more developed parts of the world. A glaring exception to this statement is to be found in the appalling conflicts in the

former Yugoslavia, but, as the Secretary-General has repeatedly stated, these are distorting the Organization's efforts in the field of peace and security, at the expense especially of Africa and the republics of the former Soviet Union, where so many internal conflicts call for the attention of the United Nations. The savagery of these conflicts underlines the fact that progress in tackling the problems created by weapons of mass destruction has not been matched by progress in controlling conventional weapons, including light weapons which contribute so perniciously to the destabilization of States and the destruction of the very fabric of their societies. This is why the Secretary-General attaches so much importance to what he calls "microdisarmament".

The Secretary-General also, of course, continues to attach the highest importance to the nuclear field. He shares the view of those who have been heartened by the decisions of the 1995 Review and Extension Conference on the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and, with them, he believes that those decisions have laid the foundation for pursuing more effectively the ultimate objective of eliminating nuclear weapons. Recent events have strengthened his view that the commitment of the nuclear-weapon States to agree on a comprehensive test-ban treaty, with no exceptions, must be honoured as early as possible in 1996. Equally important will be negotiations on a cut-off treaty. These two agreements will open the way to negotiations on further quantitative reductions in nuclear weapons. The Secretary-General is also following closely the issue of nuclear safety and nuclear smuggling, while recognizing that the latter problem has in part resulted from otherwise desirable reductions in nuclear arsenals.

A very welcome achievement in the nuclear field this year has been the conclusion of the Treaty on the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone. The Secretary-General urges the African States and the nuclear-weapon States to ensure that this long-awaited Treaty enters into force without delay.

There is thus reason to hope that by the end of 1996 most of the main issues which are currently on the nuclear disarmament agenda either will have been resolved or will be well on the way to resolution. In these circumstances, the time may have come for Member States, and the members of the Conference on Disarmament in particular, to consider what other nuclear disarmament issues could usefully be added to the agenda.

As regards other weapons of mass destruction, the Secretary-General, in his capacity as depositary of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction (CWC) has written twice this year to all Governments which have not yet ratified the Convention, urging them to do so and thus make it possible for it to enter promptly into force. I regret to have to report to the First Committee that the response to the Secretary-General's letters has been disappointing: we are still 25 short of the necessary 65 ratifications. As for the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction, the States parties have been working to correct a recognized shortcoming in it, namely, the absence of measures to verify compliance. It is important that this work should be brought quickly to a successful conclusion.

While the picture in the field of weapons of mass destruction is thus not unpromising, progress in the field of conventional weapons has been less impressive. This is partly due, perhaps, to the current impasse in reaching agreement on which forum should deal with issues relating to this category of weapons. Apart from the Review Conference of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, just concluded in Vienna, there are very few conventional issues which are currently under active negotiation.

The Review Conference of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons produced only partial results. Much remains to be done. It is especially disappointing that so little progress was made on anti-personnel land-mines, notwithstanding the rapidly growing conviction worldwide that the suffering inflicted by these weapons on so many innocent civilians is simply not justified by any military value the weapons may have.

Another consequence of the post-cold-war change in the nature of conflict is recognition that greater attention needs to be given to regional approaches to disarmament. This does not mean abandoning global approaches or ignoring global threats to international security. We need to find the time and energy to deal resolutely with both sets of issues.

It is thus very regrettable — as you, Mr. Chairman, observed — that, at precisely this time when the importance of regional approaches is increasingly recognized, lack of financial support seems likely to force the closure of the three Regional Centres. In his report to the General Assembly, the Secretary-General has made it brutally clear that, unless Member States provide the necessary funding

on a voluntary basis, we shall have to abandon the vision of conducting our regional efforts from regional bases. The three Centres will have to be closed with the result that the regional activities of the Centre for Disarmament Affairs will have to be carried out only from Headquarters and not in the regions concerned.

I return now to "micro-disarmament". By this the Secretary-General means a set of measures to deal with specific, pragmatic and achievable goals in the area of conventional weapons. An example is the advisory mission to the sub-Saharan region of Africa — or, I should say, the Sahelian region of Africa — despatched at the request of the States concerned. That mission confirmed the magnitude of the problem of illicit trafficking in small weapons in that area but the mission also produced valuable insights and proposals on how this problem could be tackled by the Governments concerned, with effective support from the international community. The Secretary-General, with the agreement of those Governments, is now seeking the involvement of the United Nations agencies that can contribute the necessary expertise and resources to this effort. He hopes that the agencies concerned, and the Governments which contribute voluntarily to their budgets, will share his perception of the inescapable link between security and development.

The Secretary-General also attaches the highest importance to the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms, a global undertaking which has shown quite positive initial results. He believes that the Register could become even more effective in building confidence and facilitating efforts to control the weapons systems concerned if it were also developed in regional and subregional contexts.

These are some examples of specific and concrete measures that, in the Secretary-General's judgement, could help to tackle the problems of excessive and uncontrolled conventional armaments in regions of the world which are especially vulnerable to conflict at the present time. He will continue to seek the support of Member States for such measures in the context of the mandate entrusted to him by the General Assembly in the field of disarmament and international security.

Finally, I turn to housekeeping matters. The Secretariat has been re-examining its ability to provide Member States with the support they need to take advantage of the new momentum in the field of disarmament. The Secretariat's principal instrument in this area is, of course, the Centre for Disarmament Affairs. The Centre is now fully integrated into the Department of Political Affairs and can thus contribute its own special expertise to the Secretary-General's preventive and peacemaking efforts in the broader context of international peace and security.

One of the most important functions of the Centre for Disarmament Affairs is the substantive servicing of United Nations disarmament negotiations and deliberative bodies. This function will continue to be given the highest priority. At the same time, we have come to the conclusion that certain other activities have largely fulfilled their objectives. Examples are the provision of forums for exchanging views on disarmament issues or the holding of conferences and the publication of documents to promote the disarmament concept. Even when funded by voluntary contributions from Member States, these activities consume a considerable amount of staff time. At this time of great financial stringency, when the Centre's staff in New York is hard pressed to handle its high-priority substantive activities, such as the Register of Conventional Arms and its servicing duties, these promotional activities will have to be given lower priority.

The Secretary-General attaches particular importance to the negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament on issues such as the comprehensive test-ban treaty and soon, we hope, a cut-off treaty. Given the Conference's growing work load, I have decided to strengthen and reorganize the Geneva branch of the Centre for Disarmament Affairs so as to enable it to provide a higher quality of service and expertise to Member States in their work there. The strengthened Geneva branch will be able to service more special meetings and review conferences that take place in Geneva and elsewhere in Europe. This will save money because fewer staff will have to cross the Atlantic from New York to service those meetings.

I am grateful to have had the opportunity of addressing the Committee at the outset of its work. I am confident that it will have a most fruitful session, and I wish the members of the Committee and their delegations all success in the deliberations in the coming weeks. Please be assured of my full support and that of all my colleagues in the Centre for Disarmament Affairs.

Agenda items 57 to 81

General debate on all disarmament and international security agenda items

Mr. de Icaza (Mexico) (*interpretation from Spanish*): Sir, please accept the congratulations of the Mexican delegation on your appointment to serve as Chairman of the

First Committee. Your experience in the field of disarmament augurs well for good results. We were most pleased to hear your statement today, and you can rely on my delegation's cooperation in carrying out your important task.

I am pleased that the Committee has elected Mexico to serve as one of its Vice-Chairmen, and I should like to thank the members of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean countries for their support. We should like to stress once again our peaceful vocation and our dedication to nuclear disarmament.

This year is a particularly important one. The Organization is celebrating its fiftieth anniversary, and half a century has elapsed since nuclear bombs were used. An important conference has been held — the Review and Extension Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Considerable progress has been made towards the conclusion of a comprehensive test-ban treaty, the military denuclearization regime in Latin America and the Caribbean has been strengthened, and the continuation or resumption of nuclear testing has mobilized the condemnation of the international community to an unprecedented extent.

The Review and Extension Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons was faced with the dilemma of deciding whether the Treaty should remain in effect indefinitely, thereby providing the nuclear Powers with an assurance that such weapons would not be disseminated and thereby making it possible and reasonable to proceed to their eventual elimination or, on the other hand, whether it would be better for there to be regular extensions so as to preserve an element of pressure for the speeding up of nuclear disarmament. Both options were focused on the same final goal, namely, to free mankind from the threat posed by the very existence of nuclear weapons.

It says a lot about our era of *détente* and uncertainty that the argument for stability and security was chosen without sacrificing the means of exerting pressure. It was decided, without a vote, to extend the Treaty indefinitely and, at the same time, to adopt a Declaration of Principles and Objectives and to set up retooled machinery for the periodic review of compliance with the obligations entered into. The three decisions are closely interlinked.

In the Declaration of Principles and Objectives, the nuclear-weapon States reaffirmed their commitment to pursue in good faith negotiations on effective measures relating to nuclear disarmament and to make systematic and progressive efforts to reduce nuclear weapons with the ultimate goal of eliminating those weapons.

In the periodic review conferences, compliance with the commitments contained in the preamble and provisions of the Treaty is to be assessed, as is compliance with the agreed Principles and Objectives. Obviously, if it is determined that there has been unsatisfactory compliance, or even no compliance, the Treaty will not have achieved the necessary universality and some States may consider withdrawing from it, as provided for in the Treaty itself.

The decision to extend the Treaty indefinitely does not perpetuate a world divided between non-nuclear-weapon States, the vast majority, and the few, very few, nuclear-weapon States. That asymmetry need not be viewed as eternal but, rather, as an incentive to achieve true non-proliferation — universal, geographical, qualitative and quantitative. The non-proliferation of nuclear weapons has meaning only if there is a commitment to, and progress towards, their total elimination. The coming years will tell us whether the decisions adopted were indeed the right ones. The answer will depend upon the nuclear-weapon States.

Progress has been made in the negotiations on the comprehensive test-ban treaty, and today we can foresee their conclusion in the near future. Examination of the legal and institutional provisions of the rolling text, which has been annexed to the report of the Conference on Disarmament, provides us with a fairly comprehensive idea of what is involved. The progress in defining areas of application has been less than had been hoped, despite the position taken by the nuclear-weapon States, which have expressed their readiness to expand the scope of the treaty to include all tests — the so-called "zero option". We hope that in the near future that article can be drafted, for without it, it will be very difficult to make progress in other areas of the treaty, particularly with regard to verification.

Mexico has stated on various occasions that the Treaty must prohibit — completely and for ever — all nuclear tests, by any State and in any environment, and that there can be no reason or justification — even related to the safety or reliability of nuclear weapons — for such tests.

In the area of verification, tangible progress has been made with respect to the composition of the international monitoring system. None the less, some aspects remain to be resolved in the political decision-making area, such as

responsibility for analysing the data that would provide the basis for determining whether a violation has taken place. The financing of the system must be as transparent as possible, and it must be ensured that the less wealthy States do not bear a burden disproportionate to their economic capacities.

The verification of an ambiguous phenomenon by means of *in situ* inspections is one of the most complicated issues to be resolved, which is understandable in view of the invasive nature of this type of inspection. How to conduct such an inspection, what kind of vote would be required to carry it out and whether prior consultations should be held are some of the difficult topics that remain outstanding. My delegation, for its part, would prefer a simple mechanism that would not lend itself to abuse but that would none the less make it possible automatically to use *in situ* inspections to clarify a situation.

We are very close to achieving one of the principal goals we have been working towards in the area of disarmament since the very beginning of the work of the United Nations. The conclusion of a comprehensive test-ban treaty has been a consistent request of the international community in many different forums, and has pivotal importance in halting the nuclear-arms race. Together with Australia and New Zealand, Mexico has, since 1993, been submitting a joint resolution in this regard and it has been adopted unanimously. This year we will continue our work with renewed energy, and we trust that negotiations on the treaty will be concluded in time for it to be opened for signature before the next session of the General Assembly.

The declaration of Principles and Objectives reaffirms that the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones enhances global and regional peace and security. In this context, it is a particular pleasure for me to emphasize that this year, the Treaty of Tlatelolco has been signed by the 33 States that make up our regional group; 32 have ratified it, and, of those, only 2 have not yet made the statement of dispensation from entry into force. In accordance with Treaty law, any State that has signed a legally binding instrument is obliged to refrain from committing any acts in violation of the aim and purpose of the Treaty. In this respect, we can affirm, and congratulate ourselves, that the Treaty of Tlatelolco has fulfilled its purpose of eradicating from its zone of application the threat of nuclear weapons.

The five nuclear-weapon Powers, in a legally binding instrument, have provided negative security assurances to the States Parties to the Treaty of Tlatelolco. These same assurances should be granted to other nuclear-weapon-free zones and to non-nuclear-weapon States that are parties to the NPT.

In the meantime, we must promote the establishment of new nuclear-weapon-free zones, in addition to the ones in the South Pacific and Africa, as an important means of nuclear disarmament. We should recall that the Review and Extension Conference on the NPT supported the establishment in the Middle East of a nuclear-weapon-free zone and of a zone free of other weapons of mass destruction. In addition, there is a long list of areas whose members have expressed support for, and worked towards, the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones and zones of peace — free from weapons of mass destruction.

During the past five years we have been hearing repeated expressions of satisfaction at the end of the cold war. This fact, which has given rise to so many expectations in the area of disarmament and international security, has none the less not given negotiations on disarmament the impetus that we had hoped for. In addition, far from leading to the elimination of obsolete doctrines based on the principle of deterrence, it has led to the consideration of new concepts such as "limited deterrence" or "joint deterrence".

Despite the commitment entered into at the NPT Conference to "exercise utmost restraint" in the area of nuclear testing, pending the entry into force of the Treaty prohibiting them, these tests have continued, with all the dangers that they entail for the environment. International public opinion was perplexed to hear that, during this era of *détente*, tests are necessary to guarantee security and sovereignty, or to ensure the reliability of the weapons, or to improve simulation techniques that would make the tests unnecessary.

These arguments demonstrate that the nuclear-arms race is continuing, they fuel suspicions between nuclear Powers and they reinforce the resistance of States that are on the verge of definitively renouncing nuclear weapons, since all of them legitimately aspire to safeguarding their sovereignty and security. One thing is for certain: they do not encourage negotiations on disarmament.

There are no proven truths, but there are obvious absurdities, as a Levantine poet said long ago. Our planet is a limited entity, and in the past 50 years 2,044 nuclear tests have been carried out — an average of approximately one every nine days. It is clearly absurd to say that this incessant bombardment, this constant shaking up of the innards of the planet has, has had and will have no effect

on the environment or on this Earth, which belongs to all of us and to our descendants.

Mexico, together with the Member States of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean, the States Parties to the Treaty of Rarotonga and many other countries, will work in support of the adoption by the General Assembly of an immediate moratorium on nuclear tests.

Mr. Martínez Morcillo (Spain) (*interpretation from Spanish*): On behalf of the European Union, may I congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chairman of the First Committee. We are sure that under your presidency the work of the First Committee will be carried through successfully.

I should like also to extend my congratulations to the other members of the Bureau. The European Union wishes to assure the Committee of its unreserved support in the discharge of the important responsibilities that lie ahead of it. The associated countries — Bulgaria, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Romania and the Slovak Republic — concur in this statement.

The fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations affords us an ideal opportunity to recall the principles and purposes laid down in the Charter of the United Nations, as well as the United Nations key contributions deriving from those purposes and principles, namely in the codification of international law, in the maintenance of international peace and security in cooperation with regional organizations, in disarmament, in decolonization, in development and humanitarian aid, in the protection and promotion of human rights, and, in general, in cooperation among nations in a wide variety of fields. Those same purposes and principles will serve as the basis for all of the Organization's future tasks, including those related to international security and disarmament.

Undoubtedly, the new international environment of today has helped us achieve the objectives set forth in the Charter and has paved the way for the signing of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction (CWC), the indefinite extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the ratification of START I, to name but a few in the disarmament field. However, new regional and internal conflicts have emerged, thereby endangering international peace and security. And so the primary purpose established 50 years ago in the Preamble to the United Nations Charter is fully valid today, and I quote:

> "To maintain international peace and security, and to that end: to take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace, and for the suppression of acts of aggression or other breaches of the peace ...".

Conflicts such as those prevailing in Central Africa, in the territories of the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and in the former Yugoslavia — in the peaceful solution of which the European Union plays an active role — clearly serve to underline the continued relevance of that United Nations purpose and also the need to attain its implementation.

Nevertheless, the virulence of some localized conflicts is a continuous reminder of the existence of global threats that have to be confronted and that represent a potential incentive for the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and the excessive accumulation of conventional weapons. That is why any consideration of a system intended to guarantee international peace and security must necessarily include both global and regional perspectives.

In short, the practical achievement of that purpose in the present international context entails preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, further strengthening existing conventions in this field, pursuing the process of nuclear disarmament, limiting and reducing existing conventional arsenals and establishing confidence- and security-building measures. In order to attain these objectives, verification and transparency will have an important role to play.

The year of the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations has borne witness to an event which, for the European Union, constitutes a fundamental element for security in the next century, namely the indefinite extension of the NPT. The European Union welcomes the decision, which was reached without a vote — an outcome for which the European Union worked actively through its joint action following the meeting of the European Council in Corfu in June 1994. Likewise, the European Union considers that the decision in favour of indefinite extension will facilitate the implementation of our common goals, namely the prevention of the spread of nuclear weapons, the promotion of the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes and the determined pursuit by the nuclear-weapon States of systematic and progressive efforts to reduce nuclear weapons globally, with the ultimate goal of eliminating

those weapons, and the pursuit, by all States, of general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control.

There are today 180 States parties to the NPT. This implies that only a small minority remains outside the fundamental norms governing nuclear non-proliferation. This is precisely why the European Union urges those States that have not yet done so to adhere to the NPT and to conclude the corresponding safeguards agreements with the International Atomic Energy Agency. The European Union wishes to express its satisfaction at the recent accessions to the NPT, which, undoubtedly, will enhance security at both the regional and the global level.

Similarly, the European Union attaches great importance to the other two decisions adopted at the NPT Review Conference, namely the decision to strengthen the review process of the Treaty and the decision on the principles and objectives of non-proliferation and disarmament. By making all States parties more accountable for the effective implementation of the provisions of the Treaty, the enhanced review procedure will serve as a valuable new element in the fight against nuclear proliferation. In this context, as in all activities in the sphere of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament, the decision of the Conference on principles and objectives will henceforth constitute an essential frame of reference.

In this context, the agreed objective to conclude a comprehensive test-ban treaty (CTBT), which will have to be universal and internationally and effectively verifiable, no later than 1996, clearly reflects the priority attributed to this question by the international community. The European Union attaches particular importance to the conclusion of a CTBT. It is actively encouraging these negotiations and is fully committed to their successful conclusion within the agreed time-frame. The European Union welcomes the progress made at these negotiations during the last session of the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva. It would like especially to highlight the proposal concerning the scope of the future treaty leading to the ban of any nuclear-weapon-test explosion or of any other nuclear explosion. This aims at a true zero-yield option for all nuclear-weapon tests. The European Union recalls that according to the decision on the principles and objectives for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament, and pending the entry into force of a comprehensive test-ban treaty, the nuclear-weapon States should exercise the utmost restraint in nuclear tests.

The immediate commencement and early conclusion of a treaty on a ban on the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices (the "cut-off treaty") is yet another priority of the European Union in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation. The decision of the Conference on Disarmament to create an ad hoc committee with a mandate to negotiate such a treaty is a matter of satisfaction for the European Union.

The European Union notes with disappointment that it was not possible for any substantive work to be done at this year's session of the Conference on Disarmament, and it has appealed to all States concerned to enable the Ad Hoc Committee to start work promptly at the beginning of the 1996 session on the basis of the Shannon report and the mandate contained therein. We repeat that appeal. The European Union is of the view that a cut-off treaty would put an end to the global production of fissile material for explosive purposes and would thus contribute to reducing the proliferation of nuclear weapons and to nuclear disarmament globally.

Likewise, the European Union welcomes the efforts made by the five nuclear-weapon States in the matter of security assurances in response to the legitimate aspirations of non-nuclear States parties to the NPT. Security Council resolution 984 (1995) adopted by consensus constitutes an important step forward as do the individual national declarations of the nuclear-weapon States concerned. The European Union notes the reference to this question in the decision on Principles and Objectives for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament which states that:

> "further steps should be considered to assure non-nuclear-weapon States party to the Treaty against the use or the threat of use of nuclear weapons"

and that:

> "these steps could take the form of an internationally legally binding instrument". *(NPT/CONF.1995/32 (Part I), para. 8)*

Undoubtedly, the indefinite extension of the NPT also implies endorsement of other activities aimed at preventing the spread of nuclear weapons. In this context, the European Union invites all States to adopt responsible policies for transfers of their nuclear material, equipment and technology. Such policies would redound to the benefit of peaceful transfers of this type of material.

In this context, the European Union cannot but underline the fundamental role of the IAEA in these areas, and wishes to pledge its unwavering support for the

ongoing process to strengthen the safeguards system through the 93+2 programme so as to ensure early implementation of its provisions. Furthermore, the European Union reiterates the invitation to all States to participate in the IAEA voluntary reporting system on nuclear transfers.

Likewise, the European Union welcomes the significant progress made in reducing nuclear arsenals and invites the nuclear-weapon States to pursue with determination their efforts in this direction. The ratification and entry into force of the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START I) constitutes a decisive landmark in this context and leaves the way open for timely ratification of the START II Treaty.

As the Security Council stated at its 3046th meeting, held at the level of Heads of State and Government in January 1992, "The proliferation of all weapons of mass destruction constitutes a threat to international peace and security" *(S/23500, p. 4)*. The European Union is determined to make every effort to strengthen the existing norms against chemical and biological weapons.

The European Union urges all signatories to the Chemical Weapons Convention, including all States members of the European Union that have not yet done so, to ratify the Convention as soon as possible, and will make every endeavour to secure the required 65 ratifications so that it may enter into force in a timely fashion. This prospect will undoubtedly have a positive impact on the efforts of the Preparatory Commission to resolve issues that are still outstanding. The European Union also urges States that have not yet done so to sign the Convention.

The European Union attaches great importance to the reinforcement of instruments for disarmament and non-proliferation in the field of biological weapons. The Union is hopeful that the ad hoc Group created by the Special Conference of the States Parties to the Convention on Biological Weapons will continue its work with efficiency to ensure that the negotiations with a view to strengthening the effectiveness of the Convention will lead to the conclusion of a verification protocol in the near future, preferably by the time of the 1996 Review Conference. In this respect, the results of the meeting of the Group held from 10 to 21 July were encouraging, since they provide a sound basis for further work by this Group, for which meetings have already been scheduled for 1996. The European Union therefore invites all States parties to participate, at the appropriate level of expertise, in those sessions. The European Union appeals to all States that have not done so to participate in the confidence-building measures that already exist by submitting annual data, as agreed at the Third Review Conference of the Parties to the Convention on biological and toxin weapons.

Apart from the obligations to prevent proliferation derived from the existing disarmament agreements, the European Union considers the measures taken on export controls to be useful instruments in the efforts to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, their object being to stem proliferation without detriment to transfers of material, equipment and technology for peaceful purposes in the nuclear, chemical, biological and space-research fields.

That is why we consider that the existing controls in these areas — the Nuclear Suppliers Group, the Australia Group and the Missile Technology Control Regime — do contribute to the attainment of the objectives included in the relevant treaties. These controls are kept under review to ensure that they continue to fulfil their role, which is to complement the existing treaties. The European Union therefore invites all States to adopt responsible policies with regard to transfers of sensitive material and to establish export control systems as a means of preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Not to be forgotten in this context is the commitment assumed by the European Union through a common action and the regulation of dual-use materials and technology. Thanks to these measures, such European Union transfers will be controlled without hampering free trade of such products, and, at the same time, their diversion with proliferation aims in view will be avoided.

There is no doubt that weapons of mass destruction cause worldwide concern. The devastating effects of their use have, unfortunately, been verified in some cases. In this respect, the firm stance of the Security Council, in particular in the case of Iraq, and the importance of the activities of the United Nations Special Commission should be noted. Regarding another case of concern dealt with by the Security Council, the European Union would like to express its full support for all efforts undertaken by international organizations or individual countries that could contribute to an early solution of the nuclear question in North Korea.

At the same time, the entire world has become aware of the terrible effects of the use of conventional weapons. Tens of thousands of casualties around the world bear witness to the cruel effects of the irresponsible and indiscriminate use of anti-personnel land-mines. It is a

matter of great satisfaction for the European Union that Governments and international organizations should have decided to respond to the suffering of the civilian population. Proof of our deep, sustained concern on this issue is the decision by the European Union to take joint action comprising three elements: a contribution to international mine clearance — for example, with a contribution of 3 million ECUs to the United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund — a common European Union moratorium on the export of anti-personnel mines, and the active preparation of the Review Conference on the 1980 Convention on Prohibitions and Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects, and the strengthening of its Protocol II. In addition, the European Union adopted, on 18 September, a common position with the aim of fostering the adoption of a new protocol on blinding lasers, which satisfies the humanitarian concern to avoid unnecessary suffering without limiting the legitimate military use of lasers.

The European Union takes note of the progress made during the first part of the Review Conference, held in Vienna from 25 September to 13 October, with the adoption of a new Protocol IV on blinding laser weapons, which responds to humanitarian concerns to avoid unnecessary suffering without limiting the legitimate military use of lasers. However, the European Union regrets that the Conference has been unable, at this stage, to agree on a significantly strengthened Protocol II of the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Mines, Booby Traps and Other Devices. Building upon the progress made on this Protocol II during the first part of the Review Conference, and keeping in mind the objectives, it stated, in its joint action of 12 May 1995, that the European Union looks forward to incorporating significant improvements in an amended Protocol II, to be adopted at the resumed Review Conference. In the meantime, the European Union strongly appeals to all participating States to spare no effort to ensure a satisfactory outcome of the Review Conference, which will significantly reduce the dangers posed by the indiscriminate use of land-mines and contribute to the eventual elimination of anti-personnel land-mines, as viable and humane alternatives are developed, as the ultimate goal of efforts in this field.

However, all these measures aimed at strengthening the 1980 Convention will have full effect only if there is a notable increase in the number of parties to the Treaty. The European Union thus calls upon all States that are not yet parties to the Convention to adhere to it. Only through universal adherence to it will it be possible to eliminate the indiscriminate use of these weapons.

Furthermore, in this context, the European Union recognizes the importance of the initiatives taken by the Secretary-General of the United Nations and supported by governmental and non-governmental humanitarian organizations, *inter alia*, the convening of the meeting on mine clearance last July, which has served as an international showcase for this problem. It has also contributed to funds being collected for the Voluntary Trust Fund. The political and financial results of the meeting on mine clearance should have a positive impact on the de-mining programmes and the work related to the Trust Fund, which was set up on the basis of a European Union initiative.

Transparency in armaments constitutes a fundamental instrument for confidence- and stability-building on a global scale, and even more so, if possible, on a regional level. The European Union has consistently supported these measures in the field of weapons of mass destruction through declarations included in the Chemical Weapons Convention or through voluntary declarations, both within the framework of the biological weapons Convention and with reference to the IAEA.

Nevertheless, the member States of the European Union would like to emphasize that transparency measures related to weapons of mass destruction are different from transparency measures related to conventional weapons.

It is indeed in the field of conventional weapons that transparency measures appear to have developed more fully, owing specifically to the establishment of the United Nations Register for Transfers of Conventional Arms. An assessment of the functioning of this mechanism, which was originally proposed by the European Union, has to be positive, although it is to be hoped that the number of countries submitting data will progressively increase. In the opinion of the European Union, this enlargement in the number of participants should be accompanied by an extension of the scope of the Register, that is to say, with the inclusion of information on military holdings and procurement through national production. The data reported by the European Union during the three years of the Register's functioning clearly reflects the Union's commitment in this matter. Therefore, it invites all States to participate, while also encouraging them to submit supplementary data, as is being done by the States of the European Union themselves. The European Union also considers it necessary not only to review the present

functioning of the Register but also to develop it further to ensure that it continues to respond to the needs which led to its creation. Thus, the European Union supports the work of the Secretary-General, in collaboration with the Group of Governmental Experts, to realize a further development of the Register by 1997. In order to promote the functioning of the Register and its further development, the States members of the European Union will submit a draft resolution on this issue.

It is not pure chance that one of the first areas in which the principle of transparency has been applied relates to transfers of conventional weapons. The European Union considers it necessary for all States to adopt responsible policies in matters relating to transfers of conventional weapons. Uncontrolled transfers could constitute destabilizing elements and have a negative effect on region and local points of conflict and tension, to which I have referred earlier in my statement.

Given the importance attached to the issue of transfers of conventional weapons, the European Union welcomes the progress made on this issue during the last session of the Disarmament Commission and is confident that further notable results will be obtained at the next session of the Commission, which is to finalize its study on this question. At the same time, the European Union believes that the Conference on Disarmament must continue to address the issue of transparency in armaments, which could also contribute to a Conference on Disarmament agenda with a better balance between issues relating to conventional weapons and weapons of mass destruction.

As I said earlier, measures to increase confidence and greater transparency in military questions may have greater repercussions in the regional sphere, above all where conventional weapons are concerned. The European Union welcomes the results obtained at the last summit meeting of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), now the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). The European Union welcomes the determination manifested in Budapest to strengthen the confidence-building measures included in the Vienna document, as well as the adoption of a code of conduct for political-military aspects of security and the global exchange of military information.

With regard still to the European region, the European Union would like to avail itself of this opportunity to reaffirm its support for the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe. The European Union considers the Treaty a basic instrument in guaranteeing and improving military security and stability on the European continent. In spite of some problems, the overall record of compliance with the Treaty has so far been excellent. The European Union strongly hopes that this record will be maintained and confirmed in November, once the present phase of the reduction of weapons and equipment to the levels established in the Treaty is completed.

Similarly, the European Union attributes importance to the Treaty on Open Skies, as a means of encouraging transparency, security and stability from Vancouver to Vladivostock. The timely entry into force of that Treaty is one of the priority objectives of the European Union, and we therefore invite all signatory States which have not yet done so to proceed to its early ratification.

The European Union expresses its satisfaction at the advances made in the field of confidence-building measures and disarmament in other areas of the world. It welcomes the signing of the Treaty of Tlatelolco by Cuba and its ratification by Guyana. The European Union also welcomes progress towards the conclusion of a treaty on an African nuclear-weapon-free zone.

The same applies to the work undertaken in the Forum of the Association of South-East Asian Nations to promote increased security and stability in the Asia-Pacific regional and to establish a denuclearized zone in South-East Asia.

Lastly, we must not fail to mention the project for the creation of a zone free from weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, which is in accordance with the decision adopted at the Extension Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. The European Union considers that this issue should be the object of a well-balanced approach within the First Committee.

The European Union would not wish to let pass this opportunity to underline the importance it attaches to the Mediterranean region and to the efforts aimed at strengthening security and cooperation within the region. In this connection, we would like to mention the Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Conference at Barcelona, which is scheduled for next November. That Conference will foster the process of establishing an area for exchange and dialogue as a means to guarantee peace, stability and the well-being of the peoples of the region.

The European Union welcomes the recent decision by the Conference on Disarmament to adopt the report presented by the Coordinator on this matter at the plenary

meeting of the Conference on 12 August 1993 in response to General Assembly resolution 49/77 B. It calls for the early implementation of that resolution, which it regards as a step towards the admission to membership of all those States that have applied to date. This remains the objective of the European Union.

Lastly, I should like to refer to the organization of the work of the First Committee. It is the considered opinion of the European Union that the work undertaken on this matter at previous sessions should continue during this fiftieth session of the General Assembly. Accordingly, in agreement with paragraph 3 of resolution 49/85 we request you, Mr. Chairman, to continue with consultations for rationalizing the work of the First Committee and increasing its efficiency. The European Union is ready to participate actively in the thematic approach that will take place after this general debate in accordance with the practice begun at the last session. We are convinced that these in-depth consultations will produce the desired results, which, in turn, will assist the United Nations in its purpose of promoting and maintaining international peace and security, a purpose established in its Charter at the time of its founding 50 years ago, a purpose which continues to be valid today.

Mr. Somogyi (Hungary): May I at the very outset extend to you, Mr. Chairman, our congratulations on your election to your important post, one fully justified by your high personal qualities, diplomatic skills and the vast experience you have accumulated in the field of international security and disarmament issues. You may rest assured that my delegation stands ready to assist you in carrying out your responsible task. Our congratulations go to the other officers of the Committee as well.

My delegation fully shares the position that has just been exposed by the representative of Spain, who spoke on behalf of the European Union as well as the associated States, including the Republic of Hungary. This coincidence of views is based on the fact that my country associates itself with the values of the European, Euro-Atlantic community of nations. Consequently, the aspirations of the European Union and of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) are in full harmony with the principles of Hungary's philosophy and policy of security, and the positions represented by those organizations are, in most cases, identical with our concrete political objectives.

Hungary too would like to see the emergence of a new European security architecture, an international security system built on cooperation among States and international organizations and institutions. We are convinced that with the ideological divisions gone, the spirit of cooperation should prevail over confrontation in international relations because it is in the best genuine interests of all nations. Thus, security policies based on national interests must be cooperation-oriented, *per se*.

It is in this spirit that we are convinced that the arms control and disarmament process must remain an integral part of our security-policy agenda. We do believe that arms control continues to be a major pillar of security and stability. Therefore one of the challenges the international community has to face today is to see to it that existing arms-control treaties are fully implemented and their implementation properly verified, that old obligations are adapted to new realities and requirements, and that new agreements, new commitments are elaborated where appropriate.

The First Committee's general debate is taking place at a time especially opportune for taking stock of our accomplishments and challenges and for devising plans for the future. We have arrived at the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations with impressive gains, made during the past few years, in the field of disarmament. Agreements to limit the proliferation of many types of weapons have been achieved at a more promising pace than ever before. Hand in hand with the ongoing transformations in the global political climate, a window of opportunity has opened, enabling us to achieve security at lower levels of armaments. Consequently, we also face an increasing need to reassess our thinking on and our approaches to the whole process of disarmament.

As 1995 draws to a close, it is almost certain that we shall come to the conclusion that it was a year in which the international community became more alert and attentive to the risks of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and showed firm determination to act against those risks.

The indefinite extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is perhaps the most telling example of this. My Government has always attached the highest priority to this goal and worked vigorously towards its achievement. We are deeply convinced that by making the NPT a Treaty of indefinite duration the States parties ensured its continued role as the major international legal instrument providing a basic guarantee for the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons worldwide.

The indefinitely extended Treaty, together with the strengthened review mechanism, will undoubtedly add a major element of stability to the emerging new international security system. Let me reiterate here that Hungary is committed to the full implementation of the resolutions of the 1995 Review and Extension Conference in all their aspects. There is no doubt that the success of the follow-up will be judged by the progress towards new significant measures relating to the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and to disarmament.

The early conclusion of a comprehensive test-ban treaty (CTBT) and the commencement of negotiations on a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear-weapon purposes are goals that, in our view, should continue to be high on the disarmament agenda.

Hungary welcomes the acceleration of the work accomplished in the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva and the increasing support for having a CTBT signed before the end of the fifty-first session of the United Nations General Assembly. This would constitute a clear-cut demonstration of the will and ability of the international community successfully to address yet another aspect of the threat posed by weapons of mass destruction.

We look forward to the resumption of the CTBT negotiations in January 1996, with the beginning of the new session of the Conference on Disarmament. Although we firmly believe that action towards securing this new international legal instrument banning nuclear-test explosions in a verifiable and comprehensive manner is well advanced and irreversible, important political decisions on key treaty elements have yet to be taken in order to meet the deadline set by the NPT Review and Extension Conference.

We should like to say that the decisions of the Governments of the United Kingdom, the United States and France to support a truly comprehensive ban on nuclear testing, including low-yield explosions, and the recent French commitment to sign such a treaty by the autumn of 1996 are positive moves in this direction. This bodes well for the Geneva talks. We are hopeful that between sessions the other nuclear-weapon States will have sufficient time to reflect on these developments and, thus, be enabled to contribute to this trend towards convergence of positions on the scope of a CTBT.

At the same time, we cannot but express our regret about the fact that the unilateral commitments to refrain from conducting nuclear-test explosions are not being maintained by all. Some of the nuclear-weapon States have decided to change their policies in this field. At this juncture, we should like to stress the importance of exercising the utmost restraint with regard to nuclear testing as a factor conducive to the early conclusion of a CTBT.

With regard to another aspect of the current agenda for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament, my Government attaches great importance to prohibiting the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and other explosive devices. As one of the major items in the programme of action adopted by the NPT Review and Extension Conference, this should be the subject of urgent negotiation. It is most unfortunate that, in spite of the encouraging consensus decisions on the subject earlier this year in the Conference on Disarmament, we are witnessing a further delay in commencement of the work.

Hungary believes that a universal, non-discriminatory and effectively verifiable cut-off treaty is realistically achievable in a relatively short period. It would cap the amount of weapon-grade material, and the verification measures would extend international safeguards to new facilities. We add our voice to the voices of those who urge the Conference on Disarmament to implement General Assembly resolution 48/75 L.

One of the positive results of the profound transformation in the security agenda in recent years is the increasing significance attached to the notion of verification for international arms-control and disarmament agreements. It clearly indicates general recognition of the fact that properly functioning, effective mechanisms of international verification are essential to ensuring compliance with the obligations deriving from various treaties and to building confidence between States.

Hungary is in a special position to be highly appreciative of such a trend. For a number of years we have been witnessing the positive effects of an elaborate disarmament verification system — namely, that of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe. Our experience has proved beyond a doubt that this kind of mechanism in itself may contribute positively to the security of the region involved. It is in this spirit that we welcome the prospects for the conclusion of a CTBT with an elaborated strict and non-discriminatory international verification system rather like the one already in force within the framework of the Chemical Weapons Convention.

Also in accordance with this approach, Hungary actively participates in the efforts to strengthen the biological-weapons Convention by elaborating its verification mechanism. A good start has been made in the work of the Ad Hoc group that Hungary has the honour to chair. This Group has identified the crucial issues for further deliberation and has prepared the ground for substantive negotiations on the elements of a possible verification protocol. Hungary advocates that this work be speeded up. We hope that that would result in the submission of specific proposals for consideration and adoption at next year's Review Conference. Hungary shares the concerns about the enormous global problem posed by the irresponsible and indiscriminate use of anti-personnel land-mines, and calls for urgent international efforts to resolutely address this issue. We express our readiness to contribute to joint action on the part of the international community, be it within the framework of the United Nations or through other arrangements. At the international meeting on mine clearance, held in Geneva in July 1995, we outlined our proposals for our participation in the corresponding programme of the United Nations.

Another way of tackling the land-mine issue is to strengthen the major instrument of international humanitarian law in this respect. Hungary assumed its share of responsibility and participated actively in the first phase of the Review Conference of the 1980 Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons. It was our expectation that it would achieve a major step forward, further restricting or prohibiting the use and transfer of those categories and types of anti-personnel land-mines that present the greatest danger to civilians. We cannot conceal our disappointment over the failure of the negotiations last week in Vienna. We also believe that the momentum and the achievements of the first part of the Conference should be preserved. At the same time, we welcome the adoption of a new protocol on blinding laser weapons, which again proves the determination of the international community to bring the obligations under the rules of war into line with the progress of military technology in past decades.

In his Supplement to "An Agenda for Peace", the Secretary-General drew attention to the need for so-called micro-disarmament, that is, the need to establish more effective ways to combat the illicit transfer and acquisition of small conventional weapons. Indeed, it has now become rather disturbing to realize the potential of such transfers to disrupt national, regional and even international peace and stability. Hence, Hungary believes that in addition to the recent encouraging development with regard to transparency measures in the field of conventional armaments, a further refinement of the functioning of the Register of Conventional Arms and an extension of its scope could serve as a new and useful means of building confidence and stability, both on a global scale and on a regional level. That is why, regarding this issue, we are looking forward with great interest to the new draft resolution that the representative of Spain, speaking on behalf of the European Union, alluded to just a while ago.

I fully agree with the view expressed by the representative of Spain that, in all probability, it is on the regional level that increased confidence and greater transparency in military matters have the most significant, positive effects, especially as far as conventional weaponry is concerned. That is why we attribute special importance to the results achieved within the framework of regional organizations.

Representing the Chairman-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), I am proud to refer here to the achievements of the OSCE summit meeting held in Budapest last December, such as the adoption of a "Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security", or the common determination of its member States to further develop those confidence-building measures that are already included in the Vienna document of 1994. Nevertheless, we are also convinced that even more concerted action and measures are needed at the regional and subregional levels, first and foremost in the context of conflict-ridden areas. Let us recall that the OSCE has already received a mandate to address specific regional security problems with special emphasis on longer-term stability in south-eastern Europe. In this context, we attribute vital importance to the early establishment of arrangements to reduce conventional armaments on the territory of the former Yugoslavia. We cannot foresee a lasting solution to the tragic war there unless we are able to introduce into the settlement process a treaty limiting the armed forces of the States that have emerged on the territory of the former Yugoslavia, including those of their neighbours and perhaps some other States as well.

Effective control of the massive arms stockpiles of that subregion would also serve as a prerequisite for the smooth implementation of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe. This Treaty has been, and will remain, a basic pillar of European security and stability, even if it is in need of some adjustments, as discussed in the course of those weeks in Vienna.

Mr. Valencia-Rodriguez (Ecuador) *(interpretation from Spanish)*: In this general debate, my delegation wishes to state its position on various subjects, without prejudice to statements we may, if need be, make on specific points later. That position relates to the following issues.

One: Ecuador supported the indefinite extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), and in so doing supported the unity of action resulting therefrom, together with the Principles and Objectives on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, on disarmament and on an improved verification system. Accordingly, we emphasize, first, the obligation assumed by the nuclear Powers to conclude the comprehensive test-ban treaty not later than in 1996. Conclusion of that treaty continues to be one of the essential objectives of the international community; secondly, the initiation and prompt conclusion of negotiations towards a convention on the prohibition of the production of fissionable materials; and thirdly, worldwide efforts to reduce and ultimately eliminate nuclear weapons in order to achieve general and complete disarmament.

Two: Ecuador supports the moratorium imposed on tests by three nuclear Powers and applauds their decision. In its opinion, even though the measures on non-proliferation and control are indispensable, they should only be provisional action leading to the complete prohibition and destruction of all nuclear weapons.

Three: As stated in the Quito Declaration adopted by the Heads of State and Governments of the Rio Group, Ecuador reiterates its profound concern at, and condemnation of, the resumption of nuclear tests by the People's Republic of China, and the decision of the Government of France to resume testing in the Pacific. The fact that these tests took place immediately after the NPT Conference is particular condemnable, not only for that reason, but also because they endanger the environment. It has been proven that nuclear testing, even underground, produces radioactivity.

Four: As regards assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States of the non-use or threat of the use of such weapons, Ecuador recalls the obligations deriving from Security Council resolution 984 (1995), in which the Council

> "takes note .. of the statements made by each of the nuclear-weapons States (S/1995/261, S/1995/262, S/1995/263, S/1995/264, S/1995/265), in which they give security assurances against the use of nuclear weapons to non-nuclear States that are Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons".

Ecuador, endorsing the statement made by the Security Council in this resolution, appeals for the early negotiation of an international treaty calling for the non-use of such weapons in the above-mentioned cases.

Five: My delegation states that Latin America and the Caribbean is the first nuclear-weapon-free zone established by the sovereign and common will of all the countries of the region. We consider that the Treaty of Tlatelolco, as well as that of Rarotonga, must be taken as models for the conclusion of other regional commitments of the same nature.

Six: Ecuador attaches especial importance to control of conventional weapons at the regional and subregional levels. It considers that regional disarmament must be complemented by conventional disarmament measures and initiatives at the world level, keeping in mind that the major Powers account for more than 75 per cent of the world's conventional military force. It is also concerned about the uneven distribution of weapons among States in a given region. In the last analysis this lack of balance, far from promoting greater stability for those which possess them only increases the insecurity of the region as a whole. Small States, with less military means, are the ones which suffer most from these imbalances of military forces, owing to the fact that militarily well-equipped countries tend to resort to the use of their force rather than to settle their disputes peacefully. Ecuador considers that the imbalance in the levels of conventional weapons can be rectified only through regional disarmament.

Seven: It should be remembered that, even though conventional weapons have been responsible for the greatest number of victims since the Second World War, nuclear weapons have, none the less, been the main subject of international control efforts. We believe, therefore, that the adoption of control measures with regard to conventional weapons should not be overlooked. In 1993, the least developed countries spent $49 per capita and per country to purchase such weapons. One major Power monopolizes three quarters of the world's arms trafficking to the least developed region. In their recent Quito Declaration, the Presidents and Heads of State and Government of the Rio Group renewed their willingness to cooperate in promoting transparency in the international transfers of weapons and in defence budgets and expenditures. One of the suitable mechanisms for exercising this control is the Register of

Conventional Arms. Ecuador has submitted the required information for that Register.

Eight: Resolution 49/75 D established the eventual elimination of anti-personnel land-mines as an objective sought by the international community. Innocent and defenceless civilians have fallen victim, economic development has been impeded and other grave consequences have resulted from their use. In this sense, Ecuador applauds the moratorium declared by some States on the export of anti-personnel land-mines. We encourage new international efforts to find solutions to the problems caused by these weapons with a view to their total elimination. At the same time, it is absolutely necessary to take measures to prohibit the use of laser blinding weapons before they get onto the illicit trafficking markets of terrorists and drug dealers.

Nine: Ecuador also recalls that in the aforementioned Quito Declaration, the Heads of State or Government of the Rio Group urged those countries which have not yet done so to sign and ratify as soon as possible the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and of Their Destruction. They also stressed their decision to work together to prepare the Convention on biological weapons through the adoption of appropriate measures.

Ten: In view of what I have just said, we can reaffirm that the actions that could lead to general and complete disarmament are closely linked to the developing concept of security. We can no longer associate the concept of security exclusively with military and border issues. Terrorism, drug trafficking, ethnic and religious confrontations and ideological conflicts threaten the State from within its own borders. At the beginning of the century, 90 per cent of the victims of armed conflicts were soldiers; today, 90 per cent are civilians. The concept of security has taken on new dimensions to cover economic, social and cultural aspects. We must therefore re-define this concept in global terms.

Eleven: In relation to this concept of security there is the urgent need to apply — fully and with universal scope — the principle of the peaceful settlement of international disputes provided for in international law. In fact, if differences among States prevail and negotiations to settle disputes peacefully are not sought, the road to disarmament will be difficult.

Twelve: Regarding the expansion of the membership of the Conference on Disarmament in accordance with resolution 49/77 B, Ecuador considers that the 1993 report of the Special Coordinator, Ambassador Sullivan, is entirely obsolete and it would be strange, to say the least, to bring an old document to life which does not satisfy the aspirations of many countries, including Ecuador, which are interested in becoming members of that body.

Mr. Dimitrov (Bulgaria): Please allow me at the outset to congratulate you on your election to the Chair of this important Committee. The delegation of Bulgaria is confident that under your able and skilful guidance the work in the Committee will yield tangible results. Our words of appreciation go also to the other members of the Bureau, as well as to the Secretary of the Committee.

The delegation of Bulgaria associated itself with the statement made by the representative of Spain on behalf of the European Union and the associated States from Central and Eastern Europe, Cyprus and Malta. In the statement on behalf of my Government, I would like to put special emphasis on certain issues which are of particular interest to the Republic of Bulgaria.

The year 1995 brought us some positive results in the field of disarmament and international security, which paved the way to a better and more stable world. A historic achievement was the decision of the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) to make the Treaty of indefinite duration and also to strengthen the review process of the Treaty. Bulgaria believes that both nuclear and non-nuclear-weapon States will endeavour to achieve further progress in nuclear-arms control and disarmament.

Bulgaria is also of the view that confidence in the international non-proliferation regime, of which the NPT is the cornerstone, can exist only if States are completely transparent with regard to their nuclear activities. Accordingly, we have established a national system of nuclear-related export control which meets all international requirements.

Bulgaria takes part in the efforts of the international community to strengthen the control over sensitive items by implementing the respective guidelines of the Nuclear Suppliers Group and the Zangger Committee. We have on numerous occasions expressed our desire to join also the Australian Group and the Missile Technology Control Regime.

As an active member of the Conference on Disarmament, Bulgaria supports the completion of a

universal multilateral and internationally verifiable nuclear-test-ban treaty by 1996 at the latest. We believe that the comprehensive test-ban treaty should prohibit all nuclear explosions in all environments. Bulgaria has at its disposal considerable expertise and equipment which may be used in a future comprehensive test-ban treaty verification system.

Another important item on the nuclear-non-proliferation agenda is the prohibition of the production of fissionable materials for weapons purposes. By establishing an ad hoc committee on a cut-off convention, the Conference on Disarmament will create the necessary framework for the initiation of intensive multilateral negotiations on this issue. We see the future cut-off treaty as an important legally binding instrument contributing to the further strengthening of the non-proliferation regime.

I would like at this juncture to express also the firm belief of the Bulgarian delegation that States that have renounced the nuclear option in a legally binding form have the legitimate right to be assured against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. We welcome the adoption on 11 April this year by the Security Council of resolution 984 (1995) and the respective statements made by each of the nuclear-weapon States on security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States. We view this resolution as a new important step of progress on the issue and as an appropriate framework for negotiating a future legally binding international instrument on the provision of security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States.

Bulgaria has demonstrated its commitment to the prohibition of another type of weapon of mass destruction — the chemical type — by being among the original 65 States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction and by becoming the eleventh signatory State to deposit its instrument of ratification. This legal act has endorsed the position that Bulgaria does not possess or produce chemical weapons and that no such weapons are stored on its territory. It is our hope that States which have not yet ratified this important international instrument will act promptly to bring the Chemical Weapons Convention into force as soon as possible.

Bulgaria also strictly abides by the biological weapons Convention, and all its research and development programmes have always been transparent as part of its commitment to help enhance international confidence in this field. We are ready to participate constructively in drawing up appropriate verification provisions in the course of the work of the Ad Hoc Group of the States Parties to the Convention. It is the position of the Bulgarian delegation that, by including verification provisions in the Convention similar to those of the Chemical Weapons Convention, not only will we strengthen the regime established by the biological weapons Convention, but we will also make it more attractive to States that have not yet joined.

The disarmament and arms-control agenda is now increasingly focused on conventional weapons and related matters. Bulgaria has contributed to the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms every year since its establishment. We see the strengthening of the Register as an appropriate step in setting up a working mechanism for ensuring transparency in the field of conventional armaments. Bulgaria favours the inclusion in the Register of data on military holdings and procurement through national production.

The Republic of Bulgaria is among the initiators of the regional disarmament process and the elaboration of comprehensive confidence- and security-building measures that have contributed immensely to European security and stability. At the same time, Bulgaria is of the view that the quantities of conventional weapons that remain in Europe exceed the needs of security and stability, especially in some regions. The interest in further specific confidence-building and arms-control measures in the Balkans is particularly well founded in the present circumstances.

Bulgaria has signed bilateral agreements with Greece and Turkey on confidence- and security-building measures — complementary to the 1994 Vienna Document of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) — that provide for lower thresholds for notification and observation. It is expected that a similar agreement will be signed soon with Romania. Such bilateral measures lead to greater transparency in military activities, have a stabilizing effect, especially in border areas, and stimulate contacts between the militaries of the respective States. The next step, in our opinion, should be the promotion of multilateral cooperation with a view to achieving comprehensive security and confidence in south-central Europe.

Needless to say, it would be impossible to achieve this task under the conditions of an ongoing conflict. We are therefore encouraged by recent developments which pave the way to a peaceful, lasting and balanced settlement to the conflict on the territory of the former Yugoslavia. Besides this, and even before such settlement is achieved, there is already an urgent need at this stage to start laying the

foundations for lasting stability, security and cooperation in the south-central European region as an integral part of a united Europe of democratic values and institutions. This effort should result in the elaboration of a common forward-looking comprehensive stability- and security-enhancing approach, as well as practical steps for its implementation.

In order to bring this into reality, Bulgaria is of the view that the following practical steps should be implemented. First, the basic standards of good-neighbourly relations and internationally recognized borders should be reaffirmed, as should all OSCE principles and norms in the regional context. Secondly, trans border cooperation, including the modernization and upgrading of checkpoints and border-crossing and customs procedures, should be developed, to facilitate the free movement of commodities, services, capital and people, and to promote cooperation at the local level. Thirdly, ways and means should be elaborated for overcoming the stagnation of, and injecting economic dynamism into, the region through infrastructure development and properly structured foreign investment and financial and technical assistance. Fourthly, transport, telecommunications and energy infrastructures in the region should be developed, upgraded and interconnected with the trans-European networks as a major instrument for fostering sustained economic growth. Fifthly, the legal basis for trade and commerce should be further improved and bilateral trade flows should be rapidly expanded through trade promotion facilities and mechanisms. Lastly, long-term cooperation should be promoted for social and economic rehabilitation with a view to building democratic institutions and civil societies in an environment of political stability and economic growth.

In the field of arms control, Bulgaria shares the view that the establishment of a future harmonized arms-control regime should combine measures of an all-European and of a regional character, reflecting in every concrete situation the concept of indivisible security. This position is based on the understanding that any disproportional concentration of armaments, especially when combined with a lack of control mechanisms, could have a negative impact on security and stability. Therefore, the establishment of a credible system of arms-control and security- and confidence-building measures for the territory of the former Yugoslavia should be an essential part of the comprehensive post-war settlement. Such relevant international bodies as the United Nations and the OSCE should play a very important role in this respect.

The Government of the Republic of Bulgaria is ready to contribute actively to the implementation of these goals.

Mr. Pérez-Otermin (Uruguay) (*interpretation from Spanish*): For the past 50 years, the First Committee has been the most important multilateral forum in areas related to international peace and security, a forum to which each and every one of the members of the international community — be they rich or poor, weak or strong — contributes with the overwhelming sense of being equal under the Charter.

Uruguay is a country of peace. The peaceful settlement of international disputes is a guiding principle of its foreign policy. Its tireless commitment to peace is a banner which it will never lay down.

While tensions that have arisen in historic moments, happily behind us, have given us a world more free and open to achieving the ultimate objectives of the Charter — to practice tolerance and peaceful coexistence, maintain international peace and security and save succeeding generations from the scourge of war — today's peace is still a peace of little wars, local and regional conflicts fanned by drastic differences of an ethnic, economic or religious nature.

In the framework of these conflicts, the work of the principal organs of the General Assembly, especially the First Committee, become especially important. Depending on the degree of the commitment entered into by Member States at the request of the Assembly, especially during this the fiftieth anniversary year, rhetoric has often run counter to the statements made at major conferences. These should translate into effective measures, but in the final analysis it is frequently forgotten that the most important components of the international system are the peoples of the United Nations.

It appears that nuclear non-proliferation is among the most important topics before the First Committee during the current session. Practically all States represented here participated in the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the outcome of which is important. The principal result is the indefinite extension of the Treaty — reaffirmation of the clauses that propose the final elimination of nuclear weapons and of any use of nuclear power for the purposes of war. Furthermore, in decision 2, on the "Principles and Objectives for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament", the Conference urged

strict compliance with what is said in the framework of the Treaty.

Among the principles that stand out are the need for States to cooperate to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons and the need for States to comply with the obligations entered into concerning complete nuclear disarmament, as well as commitments relating to the current problem of nuclear tests.

It is not without some disappointment that we have seen how many of the words used in the text of the decision and in the consensus of the participating States have been rendered meaningless by the force of the underground nuclear explosions carried out by States that have continued nuclear testing, contrary to their commitments and against history itself. While we do understand the policies of the nuclear-weapon States that have maintained a moratorium on such tests, we must categorically reject those that imperil the negotiations on a comprehensive test-ban treaty, which must be negotiated in good faith within the Conference on Disarmament, in Geneva.

Uruguay supports the efforts of States represented in the First Committee to produce a text reflecting the international community's concern about nuclear tests. With regard to nuclear-weapon-free zones, we should like to reiterate the support of Uruguay — a party to the Treaty of Tlatelolco — for initiatives of this kind. Evidence of this is our country's participation in the historic meeting of the States parties to the Treaty of Tlatelolco and the Treaty of Rarotonga, which was held at the United Nations on 21 September last. In addition, Uruguay reaffirms its cooperation with neighbouring countries of the South Atlantic through close contacts in the framework of the Zone of Peace and Cooperation of the South Atlantic, which was declared by the General Assembly in October 1986.

I should like now to refer to other specific items which deserve the Committee's attention and which my delegation wishes to highlight.

First, we are concerned at the noticeable lack of consensus in the work of the Conference on Disarmament. In fact, one cannot but be alarmed at the fact that two of the working groups within the Committee, which were charged by the General Assembly with the duty of submitting documents agreed at the last session, have been unable to reach agreement on the content of those documents. We cannot understand how, just a short time after agreement on various aspects of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, it was not possible to reach consensus on the "process of nuclear disarmament, in the framework of international peace and security, with the objective of the elimination of nuclear weapons".

Another matter of particular interest to Uruguay is that of anti-personnel land-mines. The delegation of Uruguay will support initiatives to secure approval for a total moratorium on the production of such weapons.

We should also applaud the efforts made by many delegations in the meeting of the States parties to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects — an exercise intended to reinforce the provisions of the Convention.

Specific matters before the General Assembly can often be clouded with abstractions by those who do not believe that these principles are capable of being translated into the harsh reality of international relations. For example, when we refer to agenda item 70 (General and complete disarmament) we forget such matters as illicit trafficking in weapons or the destabilization of small States — a topic so crudely persistent for the international community, as illustrated by the case of the new aggression of mercenaries in Comoros. These dreadful events can occur in a world that is not so free of international tensions because States forget that behind each intellectual abstraction, each full stop and comma in General Assembly resolutions, there is a problem both complicated and simple — as complex as the achievement of lasting peace in a world constantly at war; as simple as the straightforward implementation of the principles set out in the Charter and referred to at the beginning of these remarks.

I should like to take this opportunity to convey to you, Sir, my delegation's congratulations on your election to the chairmanship of the Committee. We have no doubt that your experience in this field, your well-known impartiality and your objectivity will inspire this body to real achievement. Our congratulations go to the other officers of the Committee too.

Mr. Mohammed Zihin (Malaysia): Allow me, on behalf of my delegation, to extend to you, Sir, congratulations and best wishes on your election as Chairman of the Committee. Our congratulations and best wishes go also to the other officers of the Committee. My

delegation is confident that your able leadership and your wisdom will ensure success in our important work.

The Malaysian delegation maintains that this Committee has an important role and task in discharging the Charter obligation

"To maintain international peace and security",

including the principles governing disarmament and the regulation of armaments. We hope that the fact that this is the last of the Main Committees to begin work will not be construed as reflecting diminished importance.

On 29 September, in his statement during the general debate of the fiftieth session of the United Nations General Assembly, the Malaysian Prime Minister, commenting on the state of the world, made the following remarks, among others:

> "The victors of 1945 have clung tenaciously to the levers of power. They control the high ground, exercising influence and power as nakedly as when they were colonial Powers. Only the masks have changed. ... Less than six months ago, we witnessed the use of the United Nations to push through, draconian-like, the nuclear non-proliferation Treaty. Before the ink was dry, some of the nuclear Powers proceeded to test their diabolical weapons. What, may I ask, qualifies some countries to possess the means of mass destruction in perpetuity? It is time that the nuclear-weapon States committed themselves to nuclear disarmament through a programmed reduction of their nuclear arsenals within a specific time-frame, beginning with the immediate cessation of all nuclear tests and culminating in their total elimination.
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> ...
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> "Perversely, the major Powers not only continue to compete in developing ever more destructive ... weapons but also compete to sell arms. And when some developing countries buy arms the Western-controlled media accuse them of indulging in arms races."

As we approach the 22nd of October, the opening of the Special Commemorative Meeting on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, there are still some Member States which have not heeded the call of the United Nations, namely "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind".

The 1995 Review and Extension Conference of States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, which was held in April-May this year in New York, was the centre-piece of the nuclear disarmament issue. Malaysia had hoped that an extension for a fixed period or a series of fixed periods would ensure the nuclear Powers to make commitments and advances in areas that would ensure the elimination of nuclear weapons. These areas include the comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty, security assurances from the nuclear-weapon States, the ban on the production of fissile material for weapons purposes, respect for existing and future nuclear-weapon-free zones, and allowing full access to non-nuclear-weapon States Parties to the Treaty to nuclear material and technology for peaceful purposes.

At the time of the Review and Extension Conference we had anticipated that the provision of *carte blanche* for indefinite extension of the Treaty would provide the nuclear Powers with a free hand: our fears were indeed confirmed as nuclear testing is continuing despite international outcries and protests.

Malaysia remains committed to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), to which we attach vital importance as a means to check nuclear proliferation in all its forms. The outcome of the Review and Extension Conference of States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons requires that the comprehensive test-ban treaty be concluded no later than 1996. The Conference on Disarmament, through its Ad Hoc Committee on A Nuclear Test Ban should continue to expedite the conclusion of that treaty. In the meantime, we would like to applaud those nuclear-weapon States that announced self-imposed moratoriums on nuclear weapon testing and the others for continuing to show restraint. We call on the nuclear-weapon States not to hinder the progress of the current work of the Conference on Disarmament to negotiate the comprehensive test-ban treaty.

The most recent announcement by some nuclear Powers regarding "true zero yield" is indeed encouraging. If this principle is accepted, it would ban any nuclear-weapon-test explosion or any other nuclear explosion, no matter how small. A nuclear test ban should be total and complete, without exception — not even for explosions to check the safety and reliability of nuclear arsenals.

The issue of nuclear disarmament is an issue of utmost importance to Malaysia. We have already submitted our written statements to the International Court of Justice in response to both the resolutions of the World Health Organization and the United Nations General Assembly, seeking an advisory opinion on whether the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons is legal. Our position is clear. We support the argument that any use of nuclear weapons is illegal under international law. Nuclear weapons should be outlawed by the international community.

Regarding the other weapons of mass destruction, we support the comprehensive ban on chemical weapons, and Malaysia was among the early signatories of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction when it was opened for signature in Paris in January 1993. Malaysia hopes that the achievement of a comprehensive ban on chemical weapons will help promote international confidence and further contribute to world peace and security. We are taking steps to implement the provisions of the Chemical Weapons Convention with a view to ratifying the Convention.

The Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction, to which Malaysia is a party, faces the problem of the lack of effective verification measures. It is our hope that the Ad Hoc Group of States Parties to the Biological Weapons Convention will come up with proposals for strengthening the Convention, with a view to their inclusion in a legally binding instrument.

While emphasis on the disarmament of weapons of mass destruction have taken centre stage, the question of the regulation and reduction of conventional armaments also deserves serious attention. Transparency at the level of armaments of member countries will contribute to confidence-building, reduce conflict situations and lessen tension in the world. Malaysia supports the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms and recently submitted its data on arms transfer for the year 1994. It is our hope that the Register could be expanded to include more data in the list.

My delegation regrets that the recently concluded Review Conference of States Parties to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons held in Vienna was not able to come up with a stronger outcome regarding restrictions on the manufacture and use of land-mines. It is difficult to comprehend that while land-mines kill or maim approximately 20,000 people a year, it was not possible to achieve the consensus required regarding their restriction. It is frightening to note that approximately 110 million land-mines are buried in 64 countries and that commerce in these mines continues unabatedly. As the international community endeavours to assist in the rehabilitation of the victims, we must practice the principle that "he who profits from the tools of war must contribute to the maintenance of peace ...".

The recent decision of the Conference on Disarmament to expand its membership is most welcome. However, we do not see the logic in limited expansion, since it risks the effectiveness of this body as a representative negotiating forum. Some countries which have championed the participation of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in the social and economic work of the international system have resisted the inclusion of NGOs in the work of the Conference on Disarmament. We maintain that NGOs also can make valuable contributions in the discussions in the Conference on Disarmament. International security is not the concern of a privileged few, but rather the common responsibility of the international community.

The Chairman: The Executive Secretary of the Preparatory Commission for the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, Mr. Ian Kenyon, has formally requested to make a statement. With the concurrence of the Committee, I invite Mr. Kenyon to make a statement.

Mr. Kenyon (Preparatory Commission for the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW)): Allow me first to thank you, Mr. Chairman, and the members of the First Committee for once again permitting me to address the Committee on the work of the Preparatory Commission for the OPCW.

Almost three years ago, General Assembly resolution 47/39, which commended the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction, and called upon all States to sign and ratify it, was adopted by consensus by the General Assembly. Today the number of States signatories to the Convention has reached 159 and 40 of them have already deposited their instruments of ratification with the Secretary-General of the United Nations. The preparatory phase for the implementation of the Convention, finalized after nearly two decades of arduous negotiations, is nearing completion. The

international community now awaits the entry into force of this landmark multilateral agreement.

The fact that 159 States have signed the Convention in the relatively short period of time since it was opened for signature in January 1993 reflects the broad international support it enjoys. The negotiators at Geneva determined that a relatively high figure of 65 ratifications should be necessary before the Convention could enter into force in order to ensure that this Convention, with its comprehensive verification regime, could be implemented in an effective manner. The fact that Governments and parliaments of 40 States in all parts of the globe have already agreed to deposit their instruments of ratification signifies their faith in the Convention as an instrument which will enhance regional and global security. It also reflects their conviction that the obligations to be undertaken by adhering to the Convention are a relatively small price to pay for the complete elimination of existing stockpiles of chemical weapons and related production facilities within a specific time-frame under international supervision.

The incidents of chemical terrorism in Japan this spring and summer have served to highlight the fact that the proliferation of chemical weapons is a serious threat even beyond the level of the State itself. While the Convention was not specifically designed to combat terrorism, there is a growing realization that the Convention will provide a forum for promoting international cooperation and responsibility, a system for resolution of national concerns and means for coordinating appropriate responses to the threat of terrorist attacks with chemical weapons, including the provision of protective equipment. Domestic laws related to implementing the Convention in each State party will ensure that developing and producing chemical-warfare agents will become a criminal offence, and precursor chemicals and raw materials related to the manufacture of chemical weapons will be tracked and controlled in an efficient manner.

However, despite the fact that the Convention has already been ratified by 40 Member States, there is a growing concern that the two largest, and the only declared possessors of chemical weapons, the United States and the Russian Federation, have yet to do so. The absence from the list of ratifiers of these two countries, which are looked upon as leaders by a number of other countries, would seriously affect the meaningful implementation and entry into force of the Convention. In addition to the 40 countries which have already ratified the Convention, many more have already completed their procedures for ratification. A number of countries, however, are waiting for the United States and the Russian Federation to take a lead. Planning for the verification activities of the OPCW and implementation of the Convention rest on the twin assumptions that the United States and Russia will be among the initial ratifiers of the Chemical Weapons Convention, and that the June 1990 Agreement between the United States and the Russian Federation on Destruction and Non-Production of Chemical Weapons will be in force before the Convention enters into force.

Accordingly, in accordance with a decision taken at the last session of the Commission in July, a troika, consisting of the present Chairman of the Commission, Ambassador Zacharias de Beer of South Africa, the previous Chairman, Ambassador Finn Fostervoll of Norway, and myself visited Washington during the month of September and Moscow over the past week to promote renewed political attention to, and early ratification of, the Convention. Despite the fact that political support for the Convention has never been in doubt, other priorities and extraneous factors are clouding the early ratification of the Convention in these two countries. As the United States Secretary of State, Warren Christopher, stated on 25 September while addressing the United Nations General Assembly:

> "we should push for the earliest possible entry into force of the Chemical Weapons Convention. President Clinton has urged the United States Senate to act promptly on its ratification, and to stop holding the START II Treaty and the Chemical Weapons Convention hostage to unrelated issues. ... The Chemical Weapons Convention will make every nation safer, and we need it now." *(Official Records of the General Assembly, Fiftieth Session, Plenary Meetings, 4th meeting, p. 12)*

The impending elections to the legislature and the presidency in both these countries make it all the more desirable that the Convention be ratified as early as possible.

In The Hague the Preparatory Commission has continued its tasks of developing operational requirements and procedures for the conduct of inspections and related activities, and building the infrastructure for the future Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. These activities have proceeded in parallel with commendable progress towards preparation for effectively implementing the Convention in member States. Eleven sessions of the Commission have now been held, producing

important decisions for the implementation of the Convention. Without going into details, I should like to highlight some achievements in the following areas. Following the development of a three-module general training scheme for inspector candidates, national training offers have been evaluated and most of the courses have been certified. The selection process for inspector-trainee candidates has been undertaken in earnest this year. The final list for training of the first group of 160 candidates for the inspectorate can be completed soon. Over all, the standard of candidates has been impressive. Besides the United States and the Russian Federation, training will take place in China, the Czech Republic, Finland, France, Germany, India, Japan, the Netherlands, Romania, Slovakia, Switzerland and the United Kingdom.

The decision was taken earlier this year to establish the OPCW laboratory and equipment store in Rijswijk. The approved list of inspection equipment consisting of 94 separate items has been drawn up and most of the specifications have been approved. Requests for tender for 43 items amounting to approximately 4.5 million Netherlands guilders have been sent to interested companies in member States. Procurement of the remaining 45 items and laboratory equipment will commence shortly. The entire procurement process in this phase is expected to be completed by the end of this year or early next year.

Work has progressed on the development of declaration forms for incorporation in the draft declarations handbook and on inspection report formats for the chemical industry. A draft model agreement for Schedule 2 facilities, which could serve as a model for other facility agreements, is in an advanced stage of development. Work on elaborating guidelines and procedures for inspections in chemical industry facilities has been largely completed. The Commission has adopted the drafts for the OPCW Policy on Confidentiality, the OPCW Media and Public Affairs Policy, and the OPCW Health and Safety Policy. Decisions have been taken to apply these policies *mutatis mutandis* to work of the Commission. Visa-related practices in member States for the smooth entry of inspectors are under active consideration. A data bank on chemical protection is being established. The provisions for a voluntary fund for assistance under the Convention have been finalized. In order to facilitate the work of national authorities and others interested in information on the Convention, the secretariat has now established a site on the Internet.

Progress on setting up the infrastructure of OPCW has been fairly smooth. The Commission has once again recommended a two-phased total budget of about $30 million for 1996. Approximately $14 million will be utilized for continuing the work of the Commission pending the sixty-fifth ratification, with the secretariat remaining at roughly its current authorized strength of 125 staff. At present 114 staff members from 44 nationalities are working in the secretariat.

An additional amount of approximately $16 million will become available upon the deposit of the sixty-fifth instrument of ratification to take care of activities planned in the six months immediately prior to the entry into force of the Convention. The staff strength upon the entry into force of the Convention will be 369, including 140 inspectors, and preliminary estimates suggest that the staff strength of the OPCW will reach around 450, including 211 inspectors, about six months after the entry into force of the Convention. The detailed budget for the OPCW will be considered shortly, but expectations are that the amount will be of the order of $100 million for the first 12 months — a figure much lower than earlier projections.

Earlier this year agreement was reached on the site and design of a new, tailor-made building for the OPCW and the related infrastructure. Attention is also focused currently on developing a personnel policy for the OPCW in order to attract highly qualified experts; on setting up an information management system which will effectively support the verification mechanism while taking care of confidentiality concerns; and on finalizing the draft for a headquarters agreement with the host State — the Netherlands.

Some issues still need to be resolved in the near future. These include the remaining issues related to declarations in the chemical industry and chemical-weapons production facilities; detailed procedures related to the verification of old and abandoned chemical weapons; the timing of harmonizing export controls in the light of the provisions of the Convention on economic and technological development; and preparing for the transition between the Commission and the OPCW.

The Commission adopted a new format of work at its last session in July. Under this system, formal meetings of the expert groups which prepare decisions for the working groups and formal sessions of the Commission are convened only if there is a reasonable expectation that they will be able to record progress. Substantive work is now proceeding on the basis of clusters of consultations undertaken by expert-group chairmen.

Member States themselves are actively addressing such matters as the planning and development of data-handling systems; setting up the apparatus for ensuring the confidentiality of declarations; the finalization of facility agreements; and the procedures for the conduct of inspections of industrial facilities. A number of member States have already passed national implementing legislation, set up their national authorities and started training escorts in receiving and guiding inspectors, reviewing and streamlining visa regulations and sensitizing immigration and customs officials for implementing the Convention in an effective manner.

A number of non-governmental organizations and research institutes have maintained their valuable support for the Secretariat in the process of national implementation in member States. The secretariat has circulated a model for implementing legislation and has continued such activities as organizing seminars in various regions of the world, making direct contacts with the industry worldwide and organizing meetings with industry representatives in The Hague at regular intervals. In 1995, regional seminars on national implementation of the Convention have been organized in Minsk, Lima, Havana, Yamoussoukro, Yaoundé and Seoul. Next month will see one in Addis Ababa. A course for personnel of national authorities, in which 49 participants and 40 member States took part, was organized last month in the Netherlands.

The Convention must be brought into legal force as soon as possible for the world to reap its benefits. A significant delay will encourage continued proliferation and provide an increasing temptation to develop new kinds of weapons and would affect the political momentum for the banning of such weapons.

The opportunity for eliminating an entire class of weapons of mass destruction for ever should not be frittered away. The international community is faced with a crowded arms-control agenda now and in the near future, and the Chemical Weapons Convention has been hailed as a test-case for other multilateral disarmament endeavours. I hope that this Committee will continue its support for ensuring the early entry into force of the Convention.

The Chairman: We have heard the last speaker for this morning's meeting.

One representative has requested to speak in exercise of the right of reply. Accordingly, since this is the first time that this right is being exercised, I now call on the Secretary of the Committee to read out the relevant guidelines concerning this procedure.

Mr. Kheradi (Secretary of the Committee): The ground rules pertaining to the right of reply are as follows:

> "Delegations should exercise their right of reply at the end of the day whenever two meetings have been scheduled for that day and whenever such meetings are devoted to the consideration of the same item.
>
> "The number of interventions in the exercise of the right of reply for any delegation at a given meeting should be limited to two per item.
>
> "The first intervention in the exercise of the right of reply for any delegation on any item at a given meeting should be limited to 10 minutes and the second intervention should be limited to five minutes." (*decision 34/401, paras. 8-10*)

Since no meeting of the First Committee is scheduled for this afternoon, in accordance with the relevant rule the right of reply can be exercised at this morning's meeting.

The Chairman: I now call on the representative of France, who wishes to speak in exercise of the right of reply.

Mrs. Bourgois (France) (*interpretation from French*): Allow me first to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the chairmanship of the First Committee, which I am sure will work effectively under your guidance.

Some delegations have referred to the question of nuclear testing. Their statements prompt the French delegation to recall the facts and to place the most recent series of tests carried out by France in the context of the comprehensive and complete end of nuclear testing.

The series under way must be considered for what it is: a culmination. Our objective is to sign, in the autumn of 1996, a treaty banning all nuclear tests and other nuclear detonations. This is the major issue of the scope of such a treaty. Representatives are aware that, on 10 August 1995, at the Conference on Disarmament, France announced its endorsement of that objective and that wording. This is known as the "zero option".

In order to achieve that aim, however, and successfully to conclude those negotiations, my country has been obliged, within the brief span of time allotted before the end of May 1996, to assure the reliability and security

of its weapons for the future and to acquire mastery independent of simulation techniques. This campaign to complete our testing will allow France to support the strictest and most satisfactory option for the test-ban treaty.

Some observations made during this debate have been unfounded. In fact, this campaign does not damage the environment. Quite recently, eminent international experts have demonstrated the harmlessness of these tests. This campaign is in keeping with the rights and commitments undertaken by France. Utmost restraint does not mean prohibition or even suspension and we have never excluded the completion of this series of tests.

In conclusion, I note that the hypothesis of an immediate cessation of tests was referred to. I must point out that the notion of an immediate cessation — and I stress "immediate" — does not apply to France in so far as the forthcoming completion of the campaign under way is precisely the stage required for a final and complete cessation of the tests, which is our common goal.

The Chairman: I should like to remind representatives that, in accordance with the Committee's decision and as reflected in its programme of work and timetable, the list of speakers for the general debate on all disarmament and international security agenda items will be closed today at 6 p.m. I hope that delegations wishing to inscribe their names on the list of speakers will do so as soon as possible.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.

United Nations A/C.1/50/PV.4

General Assembly

Fifteth Session

Official Records

First Committee

4th Meeting

Tuesday, 17 October 1995, 10 a.m.

New York

Chairman: Mr. Erdenechuluun (Mongolia)

The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

Agenda items 57 to 81 *(continued)*

General debate on all disarmament and international security agenda items

Mrs. Kurokochi (Japan): May I begin by congratulating you, Mr. Chairman, on behalf of the Japanese delegation, on your assumption of the chairmanship of the First Committee of the United Nations General Assembly at its fiftieth session. The tasks before us have particular significance in this year of commemorations, and I wish to assure you of my delegation's full support and cooperation as you guide the work of this Committee to a successful conclusion.

The year 1995 is truly a pivotal one. It commemorates the fiftieth anniversary of both the end of the Second World War and the founding of the United Nations. But it also marks the fiftieth anniversary of the use of atomic weapons for the first and — it is hoped — the last time. In this landmark year, we are encouraged by the significant progress achieved in international disarmament efforts.

I am referring in particular, of course, to the decisions made at the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) last May to indefinitely extend the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), to strengthen and improve the process for reviewing the NPT, and to adopt the "Principles and Objectives for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament". Moreover, as a result of intensive effort at the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva, we can look forward to completing the negotiations on a comprehensive nuclear test-ban treaty in 1996.

In view of the progress that has been made this past year, it is all the more regrettable that nuclear testing is still continuing. While we recognize that every country has its own national security to consider, the conducting of nuclear tests — by any country and for any reason — runs counter to the overwhelming desire throughout the international community for an end to such tests. In the belief that the great majority of countries share its view, Japan strongly calls for the immediate cessation of nuclear testing.

In the "Principles and Objectives" adopted last May, it was decided that the negotiations on a comprehensive test-ban treaty should be completed no later than in 1996. Nuclear-weapon States were called upon to exercise utmost restraint pending the Treaty's entry into force. This suggests that there is a consensus in the international community that with the indefinite extension of the NPT, the highest priority should now be placed on a comprehensive test-ban treaty. Japan is encouraged that serious efforts are under way to achieve this goal.

In response to this international desire for a test ban, and on the basis of its own strongly held views, Japan and other like-minded States will introduce in this Committee a draft resolution calling for the immediate cessation of all nuclear testing. In so doing, it is not our intention to set nuclear-weapon States against non-nuclear-weapon States. Rather, the resolution is meant as a forceful expression of the international will to bring an end to nuclear testing. We

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believe the adoption of this resolution will strengthen the environment favourable to the conclusion of a comprehensive test-ban treaty.

As I suggested, the most important issue in the area of nuclear disarmament is the conclusion of a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty. At the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva this year, we saw significant progress in streamlining a rolling text and in the practical examination of a verification mechanism. In addition, France, the United States and the United Kingdom announced important political decisions regarding the scope of the treaty, to make it truly comprehensive. Japan heartily welcomes these decisions, and requests, in the strongest terms, other nuclear-weapon States to agree to the ban on all nuclear-weapon-test explosions or any other nuclear explosion, for whatever purpose.

During the cold war, a world free of nuclear testing was beyond our imagination; now, however, it seems to be within our reach. Japan will work tirelessly for the conclusion of negotiations by the spring of 1996 so that a treaty will enter into force as soon as possible and with a maximum number of States parties. As Foreign Minister Kono indicated in his statement at the General Assembly last month, Japan is ready to host a ceremony for the signing of the treaty.

In that statement, Foreign Minister Kono also expressed the hope that nuclear-weapon States would strive to make further progress in nuclear disarmament. They must not interpret the indefinite extension of the NPT as an authorization for them to possess nuclear weapons for ever. Nuclear-weapon States are accorded a special status under the NPT; as the "Principles and Objectives" make clear, they have an obligation to pursue with determination the reduction and, ultimately, the elimination of those weapons.

I would like to take this opportunity to stress once again that nuclear-weapon States have a responsibility to respond in a positive way to the trust placed in them by States that do not have such weapons. In fact, by supporting the indefinite extension of the NPT, non-nuclear States committed themselves for ever to non-possession of nuclear weapons, with the expectation that those States that have such weapons will make progress in nuclear disarmament.

Japan believes that it is important for each nuclear-weapon State to do its utmost for the actual reduction of nuclear weapons. In particular, it strongly hopes that the United States and Russia will ratify START II and work for further reductions. For its part, Japan is engaged in various joint measures, including cooperation with the United States on the construction of a facility for storing nuclear materials derived from the dismantling of nuclear weapons in countries of the former Soviet Union. In this context, we certainly welcome the efforts that are being made by the European Union.

Japan's position on nuclear disarmament is clear: we must strive for the ultimate goal of eliminating all nuclear weapons. While we fully recognize that military force, including nuclear weapons, still plays an important role in maintaining international peace, we nevertheless believe that our goal must be a nuclear-free world. This should be achieved through concrete measures to ensure nuclear non-proliferation, to reduce existing nuclear stockpiles, and to prevent qualitative improvement of nuclear weapons.

Resolutions calling for nuclear disarmament should not be empty rhetoric; they must be put into action through realistic measures that will lead to actual nuclear disarmament. It was in accordance with this view that, last year, Japan introduced at the First Committee a draft resolution aimed at achieving the ultimate elimination of nuclear weapons. The draft resolution was adopted with overwhelming support. This year we will propose a follow-up resolution, taking into account the developments that have been made since last year. I expect that it will gain the support of all States, including nuclear-weapon States.

In his statement at the United Nations conference on disarmament held in Nagasaki this past June, Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama stated that we have entered the "era of action in disarmament". It is incumbent upon each country to consider how it can contribute to this "era of action in disarmament" so as to foster a peaceful and secure international environment. Acknowledging this new era, and looking ahead to the preparations for the next NPT Review Conference, which will begin in 1997, Japan is now engaged in devising an effective formula for convening a seminar some time next year on nuclear disarmament in the light of the extension of the NPT. We hope that this seminar will make a genuine contribution to the future NPT review process. I wish to emphasize on this occasion the importance of strengthening the United Nations role to ensure that it functions more effectively and that the various efforts of the United Nations result in practical achievements.

Having commented on the progress made this past year, I would be remiss if I did not also note that the Conference on Disarmament failed to commence

negotiations on a convention banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. This is a great disappointment, particularly since an agreement was reached to establish an ad hoc committee on this issue last March. I strongly hope that negotiations on a cut-off treaty will begin without further delay so that we can advance one more step along the path to nuclear disarmament.

Now let me touch upon issues relating to other weapons of mass destruction: biological and chemical weapons. Japan is deeply gratified that, following the agreement reached at the biological weapons Convention Special Conference in September 1994, the Ad Hoc Committee in Geneva was able to begin substantive negotiations this past July. I look forward to achieving our goal of formulating a legal framework to strengthen the Biological Weapons Convention prior to the Review Conference scheduled for late in 1996.

As for chemical weapons, the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction, which was opened for signature in January 1993, is a monumental disarmament treaty aimed at the complete elimination of all chemical weapons. However, because many countries have yet to ratify it, the Convention has not yet entered into force. Japan deposited its instrument of ratification on 15 September this year, becoming the thirty-eighth State party to the Treaty. It will continue to participate actively in the preparatory work undertaken at The Hague and would like once again to urge those States that have not yet done so to sign and ratify the Treaty at the earliest possible date.

While the importance of addressing issues relating to weapons of mass destruction cannot be emphasized too strongly, we must not overlook the problem of conventional weapons, particularly when we consider that these weapons are actually being used in regional conflicts. As Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali has pointed out, the control of anti-personnel land-mines and small arms, such as automatic rifles, is a matter of great urgency, inasmuch as they are causing thousands of casualties, including civilian casualties, in various conflicts around the world.

In this context, we warmly welcome the adoption of the Protocol on blinding laser weapons at the Review Conference of the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or To Have Indiscriminate Effects, which recessed on 13 October. While we are deeply disappointed that the negotiations on the amendment of the Protocol on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Mines, Booby-Traps and Other Devices were not concluded at this past session, we strongly hope that a consensus will emerge on strengthening the Protocol at the resumed session in April and May 1996. In the meantime, I call upon all States that have not done so already to accede to the Convention.

Another problem in the area of conventional weapons is the excessive accumulation of small arms. Although it is an aggravating factor in regional conflicts, no particular measures have yet been taken to combat this problem. Japan therefore intends to propose a draft resolution requesting the Secretary-General to establish a group of experts for the primary purpose of examining ways and means of preventing and reducing the accumulation and circulation of small arms. I hope that as many States as possible will support the draft resolution so that we can begin seriously to address this vexing problem.

The promotion of transparency in armaments is also an important task in the area of conventional weapons. In an effort to enhance transparency in transfers of conventional arms, Japan will continue to work to gain the participation of additional States in the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms and to expand and develop the system. We welcome regional efforts in this area and note, in particular, those made at the Regional Forum of the Association of South-East Asian Nations this year.

United Nations Regional Centres for Peace and Disarmament are playing a valuable role in efforts to increase transparency in conventional weapons and promote regional arms control. We therefore regret that the Secretary-General's report on the Centres recommends the closing of all three Centres because of the financial difficulties of the United Nations. I should like, however, to call attention to the Kathmandu Centre in Nepal, which is making significant contributions to regional peace and disarmament. Japan has been extending considerable assistance to its activities, which constitute the so-called Kathmandu process, and strongly hopes that it will be possible to allow at least this Centre to continue.

In this important year, when international awareness of disarmament issues is perhaps greater than ever before, I cannot but feel confident that the First Committee will make significant progress in arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation. Japan pledges to do its part to ensure that the efforts of this Committee will be successful.

Mr. Türk (Slovenia): I should like, first of all, to extend to you, Sir, and to the members of the Bureau our warm congratulations on your election. I am confident that, with your experience and expertise, you will successfully guide the important deliberations of the First Committee and I pledge the full support of our delegation in this context.

Allow me also to take this opportunity to express our sincere appreciation of the dedicated work of your predecessor, Ambassador Valencia Rodriguez of Ecuador.

Disarmament and international security matters continue to be the subject of particular attention for my delegation. Disarmament and arms-control issues play an essential role in strengthening international security. While progress has been made on various aspects of the prevention and resolution of conflicts, there remains a substantial gap between the security requirements of the present world and existing international arrangements, which are mainly inherited from another and different era. One may say that the new realities have still not been matched by appropriate and adequate security structures and mechanisms.

In order to narrow and ultimately eliminate this gap, the existing mechanisms have to be further adapted and new ones developed. After several years, it is now clear that the pace of this adaptation and development ought to be accelerated. Among other organs, the General Assembly of the United Nations, particularly its First Committee, has a vital role to play in this process.

The Secretary-General of the United Nations manifested early and persuasively his understanding of the new challenges and the need to address them in the context of a new, integrated international security system. His reports "An Agenda for Peace" and "New Dimensions of Arms Regulation and Disarmament in the Post-Cold-War Era", as well as the most recent Supplement to "An Agenda for Peace", represent a useful assessment of the new tasks and the tools for their fulfilment.

It was encouraging to see the debate on these issues intensifying within the General Assembly Working Group on "An Agenda for Peace" and its sub-groups. It would be worth considering the possibility of introducing the relevant topics developed in that context into the work of the First Committee, especially under its agenda item "Maintenance of international security". It is our feeling that, lately, the deliberations of the Committee on this item have been substantially below its potential and powers. This is certainly not a satisfactory situation. It is for this reason that, in our view, it would be appropriate for the Committee to address some of the specific issues raised in the documents I mentioned earlier, preferably taking into account the results that will have emerged from the discussion within the Working Group on "An Agenda for Peace", its sub-groups and other relevant organs. Preventive diplomacy is one of these topics which, we believe, especially deserves to have its place in the Committee's deliberations concerning the maintenance of international security.

The progress made in the disarmament field was highlighted this year with the successful conclusion of the Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Slovenia, like many other countries, welcomes the outcome of the NPT Conference and commends its President, Ambassador Dhanapala of Sri Lanka, for his remarkable work. The indefinite extension of the Treaty laid solid foundations for genuine nuclear disarmament. The three decisions of the NPT Conference, which have to be treated as a package in its entirety, created the necessary atmosphere of confidence. Regrettably, this positive atmosphere was extremely negatively affected soon after the conclusion of the Conference when one nuclear-weapon Power continued and, later on, another resumed its nuclear testing.

It should be reiterated that, following the indefinite extension of the NPT, the primary responsibility for the effective implementation of the Treaty's provisions lies with the nuclear-weapon Powers themselves. In particular, this includes article VI of the NPT, in conjunction with the Principles and Objectives for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament. If the obligations stipulated in these provisions are not honoured in earnest, the fate of the Treaty, and its desired universality, will be uncertain despite its indefinite extension.

In this connection, we follow closely the progress of the negotiating process concerning the nuclear test ban. We are encouraged by the re-establishment of the Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear Test Ban and by the renewed commitment to meet the goal of concluding the comprehensive test-ban treaty by next year. The importance of achieving this goal can not be overestimated.

At the same time, we welcome the establishment of the Ad Hoc Committee on prohibition of production of fissile material for weapons purposes which, we hope, will lead to the eventual conclusion of the multilateral treaty

banning the production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons. Rapid progress on this track would contribute to maintaining the momentum created by the adoption of decisions of the NPT Conference this year.

As these and other disarmament activities are taking place within the framework of the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva, let me at this point comment briefly on the enlargement of the Conference on Disarmament. While the initiatives for the expansion of its membership have finally resulted in an agreement to include 23 more States, it should be noted with regret that, first, the date of this limited expansion remains in the uncertain future and, secondly, the situation of 12 other candidates, including Slovenia, is left unclear. I wish to reiterate our conviction that the enlargement would strengthen the Conference on Disarmament and that the most appropriate solution would be to include all peaceful States Members of the United Nations that have expressed their wish to participate as full-fledged members in the work of the Conference on Disarmament.

One of the most important aspects of disarmament efforts relates to the question of conventional weapons. I wish to note the modest progress made during the Review Conference of the Parties to the 1980 Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons which was adjourned last Friday in Vienna. Slovenia, as a party to this Convention, welcomes the adoption of a new Protocol IV which prohibits the use of laser weapons designed to cause permanent blindness. Together with numerous other States, we were very disappointed by the Conference's failure to agree on a text of the Protocol related to land mines. We hope that the reconvened Review Conference will accomplish this task by early May 1996 in Geneva.

In parallel, Slovenia will continue actively to support the United States initiative regarding anti-personnel land-mines. Slovenia does not export anti-personnel land-mines and, therefore, already applies in practice the provisions of resolution 49/75 D urging States to declare moratoriums on these exports.

Furthermore, we should not fail to address adequately the question of the continuing operation of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms. It is deplorable that reporting to the Register is still far from being comprehensive and universal. Slovenia maintains that the Register represents an important means for strengthening transparency in the question of armaments and thus contributes effectively to confidence-building on a global scale. Slovenia has already suggested some elements to be considered for the further development of the Register. For example, information on military holdings and on procurement through national production should be elevated to the same level as information on transfers, that is, it should be given the form of two additional categories equal to the existing ones, namely, exports and imports. Besides, the time has come when it may be necessary to consider various incentives in order to promote and facilitate universal and comprehensive reporting.

Regional security is an integral part of global security. Consequently, sufficient emphasis should continue to be placed on various regional approaches to international security. Situated in the Central European region, Slovenia has been striving to overcome, and to assist in processes to overcome, the precarious security vacuum left after the profound changes that took place in Europe at the end of the 1980s and in the 1990s. We are determined to work further on developing close friendly relations with all our neighbours and our multilateral ambitions have not diminished, in spite of the sometimes unnecessarily slow pace of the expansion and consolidation of different European security arrangements. Slovenia has been an active participant in the Partnership for Peace programme with a view to becoming a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). It will continue its efforts to contribute to the further strengthening of pan-European security mechanisms embodied in the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). Lastly, Slovenia will continue to support the efforts of the international community and, in particular, those of the parties involved, to bring an end to the armed conflicts in the Balkans.

Let me, in closing, refer briefly to the cooperation between regional arrangements and the United Nations. This cooperation remains essential. It is imperative not to neglect the important work already done by various United Nations bodies in this domain. In this connection, let me mention specifically the guidelines and recommendations for regional approaches to disarmament within the context of global security adopted by the Disarmament Commission and endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 48/75 G of 16 December 1993. I wish to emphasize again the practical relevance of such principles as the principle requiring that the regional arrangements have to be freely agreed upon by participating States.

It is of great importance that regional and subregional arrangements be developed on the basis of democratic principles. The essence of such arrangements is in their voluntary nature and in the genuinely shared common

interests of the members. In Europe, where a variety of subregional arrangements might emerge, this basic principle remains particularly important.

Finally, the fact that the principle was most clearly formulated in an instrument developed by the United Nations Disarmament Commission illustrates an important point -- the relevance of that disarmament body in current circumstances. Here we have an example of what should guide us in our thinking on the future restructuring of the United Nations organs in the field of disarmament.

Mr. Chua (Singapore): I should like, on behalf of my delegation, to express full confidence in you, Mr. Chairman, on your election to your high office. We are certain, given your experience and leadership qualities, that you will serve the Committee with distinction.

The Asia-Pacific region is experiencing an unprecedented period of peace and prosperity. After some of the most disastrous wars of the twentieth century, the guns are now virtually silent. Instead, the Asia-Pacific region has become the most economically dynamic region in the world. The challenge for all Powers, big and small alike, is how to manage change and preserve optimal conditions of peace and stability so as to ensure prospects for continued economic growth.

Crucial to the peace and stability of the Asia-Pacific region is a stable balance of power among the major players, especially in the triangular relationship of the United States, China and Japan. However, with greater wealth and confidence, countries inevitably restructure their relations with one another. Such restructuring is potentially destabilizing.

This is in the broad security context in which current international disarmament efforts are taking place. We in the Asia-Pacific region generally welcome the progress made towards nuclear non-proliferation, especially the indefinite extension, this year, of the Non-Proliferation Treaty. We also support the positive shift in international disarmament efforts to encompass transparency in the transfer of arms and the non-use of conventional weapons that cause great bodily harm.

However, arms reduction *per se* will not produce conditions for peace, prosperity and growth. There is no simple, causal relationship between disarmament and peace. In fact, the indiscriminate reduction of arms could be destabilizing if it were to impact on the balance between major Powers. For example, if the United States were to withdraw its military forces from the region, that could destabilize the entire region as other countries scrambled to fill the vacuum.

There have been accusations that an arms race is taking place in the Asia-Pacific region. As countries become more prosperous they naturally try to upgrade their defence capabilities. This is not a negative development so long as it strengthens the overall balance of power in the region.

To this end, the Asia-Pacific countries have begun to experiment with a comprehensive approach to security which integrates military, political, economic, social and other aspects. There is no master plan or road-map. A great deal of innovation and ingenuity will be required to ensure that the process enjoys support, given the region's diversity.

One concrete achievement was the establishment in 1992 of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) -- a high-level Forum to facilitate open dialogue and consultation between regional and extra-regional Powers on issues of common concern. The aim is to foster a habit of consultation in order to reduce the risk to security and build confidence among participants and, thus, develop a more predictable and constructive pattern of behaviour. The ARF has held three meetings and, as a sign of its growing maturity, has begun to tackle difficult issues such as the South China Sea disputes.

During the Forum's third meeting, which was held in Bandar Seri Begawan in August this year, the Foreign Ministers charted its future direction. They decided that the ARF process was taking place in three stages -- the promotion of confidence-building, the development of preventive diplomacy and the elaboration of approaches to the resolution of conflicts. It would move along two tracks -- track-one activities to be carried out by Governments, and track-two activities to be implemented by strategic institutes and relevant non-governmental organizations. The ARF process was further institutionalized through the establishment of inter-sessional support groups.

Other, complementary means within the ARF framework are being actively pursued to strengthen the process. During the second ARF meeting, in Bangkok in 1993, the Foreign Ministers agreed to

"endorse the purposes and principles of the ASEAN Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in South-east Asia

> as a code of conduct governing relations between states and a unique diplomatic instrument for regional confidence-building, preventive diplomacy, and political and security cooperation".

The principles and purposes of ASEAN's Treaty of Amity and Cooperation were also endorsed in a consensus resolution sponsored by more than 130 countries — representing all geographical regions — at the forty-seventh session of the United Nations General Assembly. Given the strong support demonstrated, ASEAN is now considering means for States that are not members of the Association either to associate themselves with or to accede to the Treaty, as they are entitled to do under its terms.

Confidence-building and preventive-diplomacy measures cannot replace, but must complement and strengthen, existing political and security arrangements. The continued and long-term engagement of the United States remains vital because it has been the strategic anchor for regional stability for the past five decades. This was a point explicitly endorsed by the ASEAN Foreign Ministers during their annual meeting, in July 1995, in Bandar Seri Begawan, when they

> "stressed the importance of a stable relationship among major powers ... and expressed the hope that countries in the region would continue to work together to maintain security and stability to ensure rapid economic growth and progress".

ASEAN has agreed on the importance of maintaining an open and outward-looking orientation towards security. It adopted a Programme of Action for the Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality (ZOPFAN), which has moved away from its initial, exclusionary focus towards emphasis on engaging the major Powers to ensure a stable regional balance of power.

Decades of war and misery have taught the Asia-Pacific countries an important lesson. Through their own bitter experiences, countries have learned that development is the key to peace, prosperity and progress. Development is not an alternative to security but a necessary condition for long-term peace and progress. Also, as countries get richer, there is less propensity for war, or even radical change, because they are committed to promoting prosperity.

Finally, what I have just sketched is a small country's perspective on disarmament and security. You may rest assured, Mr. Chairman, that, within the framework I have elaborated, my delegation and I will extend our fullest support to you in the work of the Committee.

The Chairman: I now call on the Director of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency of the United States of America, Mr. John Holum.

Mr. Holum (United States of America): The United States pledges its cooperation in the vital work that lies ahead.

I shall deliver an abbreviated version of my written text.

For the international community the way forward in arms control and non-proliferation is clear. We must continue to move away from the divisive ideological and political struggles of the cold-war era and, instead, set our sights on the substantive international security interests of all nations — East or West, South or North, developing or industrialized.

While the international community redoubles efforts to combat nuclear proliferation and terrorism, we must also seek to control all dangerous weapons, including the conventional arms that spread suffering and instability so broadly around the world.

This year the United States will again be calling on all nations to join the moratorium on the export of anti-personnel land-mines. Washington is gratified that more than 20 States have already decided to take this step. Temporary set-backs notwithstanding, we all should be determined to make progress on this grave problem.

This body must press for the earliest possible entry into force of the Chemical Weapons Convention. President Clinton is leading a strong and determined effort for the United States Senate to act promptly on its ratification, along with that of START II. Grim headlines remind all nations that the world needs the Convention now. The United States is heartened that 40 States have now ratified the Convention. My Government is determined to play its proper role in the entry into force and implementation of the Convention.

Earlier this year, in this building, nearly 180 nations united in an international security decision of transcendent importance: working together in new ways, across old dividing lines, to make the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) permanent. That Conference was not a victory for any group of countries, but, rather,

a triumph for all nations. All NPT members joined to confirm its contributions in containing the spread of nuclear weapons, fending off the costs and dangers of regional arms races, fostering historic steps towards disarmament and sharing the benefits of the peaceful atom.

Let us remember that the bulk of the support for indefinite extension came from non-aligned countries. The framework for the final result in New York originated largely in South Africa, a nation with special standing thanks to its renunciation of nuclear weapons and its leadership among the non-aligned. The strengthened review process and principles that at once protect the Treaty for all time and keep the spotlight shining bright on the balance of its mission were conceived not in Washington, Moscow or London, but in Pretoria.

Today I want to focus on the part of the Conference decision that clarified the Treaty's animating principles: universality, non-proliferation, nuclear disarmament, nuclear-weapon-free zones, security assurances, safeguards and peaceful uses of nuclear energy. In affirming these principles, the Conference confirmed that extension of the Treaty was not an end, but a new beginning.

A central principle, with several parts, is nuclear disarmament.

For decades many States have championed a comprehensive test-ban treaty as the single most important step towards fulfilment of article VI of the NPT. The NPT Conference reaffirmed its singular importance, calling for completion of a comprehensive test-ban treaty no later than 1996.

We welcome the progress made in the Conference on Disarmament towards a comprehensive Treaty. Building on that work, President Clinton is committed to concluding the complete text of the agreement by April, the end of the first part of the 1996 session of the Conference on Disarmament. We would anticipate that the First Committee, at a resumed session, and the General Assembly, at its fiftieth session, would endorse the Treaty so that it could be signed prior to the beginning of the fifty-first session of the General Assembly.

The time for a comprehensive test-ban treaty is at hand. Advances in science and the end of the cold war have combined to make possible at last what scientists and statesmen have sought for over four decades - but I would remind the Committee that political and geostrategic circumstances are constantly changing. The opportunity we have today may be fleeting. We must seize it, lest delay again jeopardize prospects for the treaty — perhaps for a short time, perhaps for many more years.

Hence, we call on all nations participating in the work of the Conference on Disarmament to accelerate their efforts to conclude the text of a treaty and to come together on positions that command the support of the international community. The time has come to move to closure on common ground.

It was in that spirit that President Clinton, late in January of this year, withdrew the United States proposal for a 10-year withdrawal right. Furthermore, two months ago President Clinton sent an unmistakable message that the NPT Conference did not lessen, but rather intensified, the United States commitment to a test ban. He called for a true zero-yield comprehensive test-ban treaty with no exceptions, not even for nuclear explosions with yields of only a few pounds. This decision, along with the parallel decisions of France and the United Kingdom, gives a powerful impetus to the negotiations in Geneva, for all nations should be able to embrace a treaty where the word "comprehensive" has its plain meaning: zero nuclear yield, with all countries treated the same.

The comprehensive test-ban treaty will add far more to the security of all States than further nuclear tests, anywhere, by anyone, for any purpose. The world's nuclear arsenals have been more than sufficiently tested. Now it is we who are being tested.

Another measure endorsed specifically at this year's NPT Conference is a ban on the production of fissile material for nuclear explosive devices.

Many nations have long sought such a cut-off. India's Prime Minister Nehru, for example, first called for one in 1954. Two years ago, here at the United Nations, President Clinton strongly endorsed the cut-off, and the General Assembly passed a consensus resolution mandating negotiations. Then, this year, the NPT Conference called for the immediate commencement and early conclusion of negotiations. Still, remarkably, those negotiations have yet to begin.

It is deeply ironic that some of the countries that have historically been the strongest proponents of the cut-off have noticeably lost enthusiasm for it, now that its realization is potentially at hand. A few States may harbour doubts that such an agreement will serve their interests, and so wish to preserve their options. However, they should

ponder carefully whether they really want to leave themselves open to a competition that can last for ever and never be won. The history of arms races offers ample proof that the quest for an indefinable "enough" is a fool's errand.

Others have absolutely no intention of doing anything inconsistent with a fissile-material production cut-off. Indeed some have joined in repeated consensus decisions recognizing the value of a cut-off but are tempted by the notion that its negotiation should be linked to other causes, such as yet another nuclear negotiating process in Geneva. That is a formula for paralysis, not progress, and thus for defeating a goal all NPT Parties have endorsed.

Nor should anyone be taken in by the familiar negotiating tactic of making the perfect the enemy of the good. The fissile-material cut-off cannot solve every problem, but it will solve an important one by capping the amount of material for nuclear explosives, not just in the nuclear-weapon States, but also in the parts of the world that can least bear the risks of escalating arms races. Here, too, opportunities lost may never be regained, so let us act accordingly: open negotiations now, honour the expressed will of the NPT Conference, buttress the test ban and make all our people safer.

Another element of disarmament is to counter the overarmament of the cold war. Continued reductions before and since the New York Conference have shown that a permanent NPT advances nuclear disarmament by solidifying the global security environment in which it can proceed.

Nuclear weapons now play a smaller role in United States security strategy than at any time since their inception. Accordingly, in place of the inexorable growth of arsenals in years past, today they are declining at an even faster pace. The United States is continuing to dismantle up to 2000 nuclear weapons a year, the highest rate that technical limitations will permit.

Of course, every path has its twists: START II must still enter into force. But that will indeed happen, because START II is demonstrably in the interests of both Russia and the United States. Meanwhile, as ratification efforts are pressed, both in Washington and in Moscow, START I reductions are running more than two years ahead of schedule.

And we are poised for further progress. The United States and Russia are moving on from limiting delivery vehicles and weapons systems towards more visibly and irreversibly eliminating nuclear warheads. Presidents Clinton and Yeltsin last year instructed their experts to begin consideration of the next steps. As the United States affirmed both before and at this year's Conference on the Non-Proliferation Treaty, nuclear disarmament remains our ultimate goal.

Since last May the world has gained ground on another principle of the NPT Conference — that of universal adherence to the NPT. Just since this spring, four more States — Chile, Comoros, Vanuatu and the United Arab Emirates — have joined, with more on the way. The number of parties to the NPT is approaching the roster of the United Nations itself. Only nine States remain outside the Treaty.

Progress is continuing also on the NPT Conference principle endorsing nuclear-weapon-free zones as a useful complement to the NPT.

Recent events, including the negotiations on a comprehensive test-ban treaty, have led the United States to move quickly to come to a final decision on the Treaty of Rarotonga. The United States also welcomes the recently concluded Treaty of Pelindaba, which will establish the African nuclear-weapon-free zone. And we hope that a South-East Asian nuclear-weapon-free zone that meets our criteria can be concluded.

Every State in the Middle East has endorsed in principle a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons as well as of other weapons of mass destruction. The United States is, of course, gratified by the noteworthy recent success in the Middle East peace process. We reaffirm once more the importance of the early realization of universal adherence to the NPT.

A long-standing desire for strengthened security assurances has been met this year by declarations issued by each of the five nuclear-weapon States and by the adoption by consensus of Security Council resolution 984 (1995). Those actions were directly responsive to recommendations by non-nuclear-weapon States to harmonize negative security assurances and to make more explicit the role of the Security Council in responding to nuclear aggression against non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the NPT. These measures represent substantial progress in enhancing the credibility of security assurances to such States. The NPT Conference agreed that further steps in this area should be considered.

The effectiveness of the NPT is closely linked with the effectiveness of its safeguards regime, an important principle endorsed and enhanced at this year's NPT Conference. The United States has worked closely with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to strengthen nuclear safeguards through "Programme 93+2". Since the Conference, the Agency's Board of Governors has agreed to implement a number of important recommendations that will substantially enhance its ability to detect undeclared nuclear activities. We urge every State to support these recommendations and we expect to support a second set of additional measures that will be presented at the Board of Governors meeting in December.

The United States will likewise continue strongly to support peaceful uses of nuclear energy under effective international safeguards. My country has actively sought out opportunities for peaceful nuclear cooperation; for example, through sister laboratory arrangements with Egypt, Morocco, Kenya, Ghana, Malaysia, Thailand, Peru and Mexico. We recently signed a major agreement to pursue peaceful nuclear cooperation with South Africa. The United States has also consistently been the largest single contributor of extrabudgetary resources to the Agency's technical assistance programme.

In multilateral diplomacy, real change is hard. The old ways will always have their disciples, so long as memory is more easily summoned than imagination. But the time for real change has come: we must sustain a new dialogue.

The towering success of this year's NPT Conference shows that nations once thought to be in rival camps can work with one another rather than talk past one another; that steps forward can replace confrontation over rhetorical absolutes; that international security can triumph over the old international "politics as usual". Indeed, our work together in that most fateful multilateral arms-control conference in history shows that a constructive new dialogue has already begun.

Now we must apply this new way of working to the great challenges we face as we go forward, including negotiating the comprehensive test-ban treaty, and the fissile material cut-off treaty.

The United States considers itself honour-bound to live up to the commitments made and reaffirmed five months ago — but we expect the same of all other countries. Those who trifle with their prior commitments harm more than the NPT regime or a particular negotiation — they damage the very fabric of international security, with their cynicism about the possibilities of the work we do.

The NPT embodies balance and symmetry; non-proliferation and disarmament are both imperative, and all States are called to play their role in the Treaty's great hammering force against nuclear weapons. Article VI is not limited to nuclear disarmament, or to the nuclear-weapon States. All States are accountable for their deeds and their words. No State is exempt — or automatically suspect — because it is or is not a nuclear-weapon State, or because it did or did not once represent some bloc or group of countries. Those urging disarmament on others must also practise it themselves. If we heed these lessons, we will take meaningful steps towards achieving the full promise of arms control and disarmament.

Cynics will mock this as counsel to move slowly — but it is in fact counsel to move forward. After all, who here would have dreamed, just a few short years ago, that the United States would be out front, pulling for a comprehensive test-ban? Or that we would be among those most strongly supporting a fissile material cut-off?

The United States invites all countries to join us in the constructive new dialogue of the era following the extension of the NPT. This will propel our efforts today — even as it honours 50 years of United Nations work in disarmament.

If we work together in this way, I know we can build the kind of world that is in all of our deepest interests: a world where fissile material for weapons is never again produced; where nuclear weapons are never again exploded, and can ultimately be eliminated; where nations are esteemed, not for the arms, but for the commitments they keep, to each other and to their own people.

Mr. Camacho Omiste (Bolivia) (*interpretation from Spanish*): First, I should like to convey the congratulations of the delegation of Bolivia to you upon your election to serve as Chairman of the First Committee. We are convinced that under your skilful guidance, the Committee will achieve positive results.

As we commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, it is appropriate to reflect in all of the Committees, on the role of the Organization, and to reaffirm our trust in the validity of the tasks given to this universal forum by the San Francisco Charter.

The barbarity and suffering occasioned by two world wars underscored the urgency of establishing an institution, representing all peoples, which would foster the maintenance of peace and the strengthening of international security. In the visionary understanding of the founding fathers of the United Nations, the aim of saving humanity from the scourge of war is inseparable from the values of human solidarity.

This is why peace among nations is a necessity and is possible only to the extent that relations of cooperation and mutual respect are developed. Friendship among peoples is strengthened when well-being, justice and law become realities. Disarmament and security are also the cornerstones of the United Nations system and the basis for the construction of a better world.

Over the years, many issues in international life have changed, some have remained the same and others have become thornier. It is saddening to note that in recent times, despite the Charter, more than 100 local and regional wars have occurred with their aftermath of death and destruction. At this very time there are conflicts that touch the universal conscience and raise serious questions as to the effectiveness of the current security system. Still, we can feel satisfied that we have avoided the repetition of the use and the threat of the use of nuclear weapons, as we are aware that both questions are the crux of the contemporary policy of power and, indeed, open up to question the validity of the principle of the juridical and sovereign equality of States. We therefore consider it a positive step to adopt, as soon as possible, a binding instrument prohibiting once and for all the testing of nuclear weapons.

We would also like to place emphasis on initiatives in preventive diplomacy capable of linking economic and social tasks with missions that are more properly political or related to international security. As we all know, general and complete disarmament continues to be a postulate. Accordingly, the phenomenon of the arms race continues to cause uncertainty, heightened by the considerable economic and human resources devoted to that end. It is a paradox that each human being contributes, on average, the equivalent of $2 per year to the maintenance of peace, whereas, at the same time each one must contribute more than $150 to support military expenditures. The world, and particularly the millions of people who live in extreme poverty, would presumably benefit from a conversion of those resources into contributions to peace and human rights policies.

In the five decades of its existence, the United Nations has dealt with many conflicts and has demonstrated its ability to prepare the right answer for each situation, which has made it possible for it to design a new way of organizing international relations. In this context, it has made a noteworthy contribution to the codification of norms, the scope of which is particularly beneficial.

For much of its life, the United Nations has been influenced by the struggle between antagonistic ideologies that impact on the full compliance with and achievement of historic objectives. The fiftieth anniversary is being celebrated at a time of profound changes which coincides with the emergence of a new international era, with contradictory signs in which we can see both positive and negative elements.

The end of the cold war has opened a cornucopia of opportunities. The nature of the changes affects the global structure of power as well as the capability of exerting influence in world policies. Peoples seek space in social, political and economic life, which cannot be based on relations of predominance or force. The tasks of international peace and security must be addressed according to the principle of responsibility shared among all States; they cannot be the exclusive prerogative of some.

We acknowledge the magnitude of globalization and interdependence and we must use the wealth and richness of plurality in the democratization of the world system. This Organization is the depository of great, shared hopes which must not be dashed. It is the right time to give substance to the aims and purposes so often cited, and to contribute to the building of a better society.

We need a future of certainty, justice, peace and security for our peoples. This will be possible only if there is respect for international law and general disarmament, which will discourage situations of force and promote the negotiated solution of disputes. To counter the use of force, we will call on the power of reason and dialogue.

In sum, the principles that will bring us closer to this goal are: the sovereign equality of States; universality in commitments and decisions; shared responsibility; impartiality in international mechanisms; respect for diversity; transparency in decision-making systems, and the demilitarization of international relations. These principles should be the cornerstones of a strategy for peace.

Mr. Amorim (Brazil): Allow me to express my satisfaction at seeing you, a dedicated and experienced diplomat, as Chairman of the First Committee. You can count on our support.

This fiftieth session constitutes an ideal opportunity for all Members of the United Nations to renew their commitment to the purposes, principles and norms of the Charter. It is also a time for assessment and evaluation.

The First Committee, which is the main organ of the General Assembly dealing with disarmament and international security, must take part in the process of reform in which we are all engaged. It is our duty to ensure that the General Assembly shall be in a position to play its important role in matters pertaining to disarmament and to the maintenance of international peace and security, in accordance with Article 11 of the Charter.

The First Committee may create the necessary conditions for a more fruitful dialogue between the General Assembly and the Security Council. It also has the responsibility to provide political inputs to the Conference on Disarmament. It constitutes the most important forum available to the international community as a whole in which to pronounce itself on a wide range of matters affecting international security, such as the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, nuclear disarmament, illicit arms trafficking and transparency in armaments.

For some time now, and especially since the adoption of resolution 48/87, the First Committee has been making efforts to rationalize and improve the effectiveness of its work. Of particular significance, in our opinion, is the organization of agenda items around thematic clusters and the adoption of a phased approach.

Yet, as is frequently said, the mechanisms of the United Nations can only be as good as its Member States allow them to be. The next steps in the process of revitalization of the First Committee should involve greater political will on the part of all States to engage in a constructive dialogue and to respond to the concerns of the international community. The mechanical reiteration of pre-set positions, which impeded any result in two of the three Working Groups at this year's session of the Disarmament Commission, could undermine all efforts towards reform.

On the positive side, we must recognize that the post-cold-war era has already produced a crop of meaningful resolutions coming from the First Committee. Allow me to recall just a few: the unanimous calls for a comprehensive test-ban treaty and for a fissile materials cut-off treaty; the endorsement of the Chemical Weapons Convention; the establishment of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms; the request for an advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the legality of the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons; the land-mine initiative; the denuclearization of the South Atlantic; and the resolutions on the role of science and technology in international security.

The First Committee should build upon these achievements. It could, for instance, prepare the ground for the resumption of the dialogue between developed and developing countries on the question of international transfers of advanced technologies. The international community will have to address this issue in the future with a view to securing the complementary objectives of the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and access to advanced technology for peaceful purposes.

This year's session of the First Committee is marked by two anniversaries. As we celebrate the founding of the United Nations, we are also reminded of the fiftieth anniversary of the introduction of nuclear weapons and the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The memory of that fateful event has helped to renew the commitment of international public opinion to the cause of the complete elimination of nuclear weapons, which was the goal of the very first resolution of the General Assembly.

The work of the First Committee during the fiftieth session will be influenced by two important events that seem to push us in opposite directions. The first was the indefinite extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, which was presented to the international community as the basis upon which further accomplishments in nuclear disarmament would be built. The second, however, rekindled memories of the worst years of the cold war and flouted the feelings of public opinion. I am referring to the continuation or resumption of nuclear testing by two nuclear Powers.

For the past months, we have listened with great attention to the explanations presented with competence and professionalism by representatives of these two nuclear-weapon States. I am bound to state our disagreement with the arguments presented. We will therefore support the adoption of a General Assembly resolution on this matter, as was decided in the joint meeting of the States Parties to the Tlatelolco and Rarotonga Treaties on 21 and 22 September.

The only way to leave this regrettable situation behind us is to move forward decisively and to conclude a comprehensive test-ban treaty as soon as possible and no later than the middle of 1996. In this connection, recognition should be given to the positive contribution of the decision by President Clinton of the United States, on 11 August 1995, to pursue a true zero-yield comprehensive test-ban treaty. We were also encouraged by similar statements from other nuclear Powers.

Brazil calls upon all States to express their support for the "Australian formula" for the scope of the comprehensive test-ban treaty, to accept adequate norms for on-site inspections and to support the early conclusion of the treaty. Let me add that a comprehensive test ban would be a contradiction in terms if it did not forbid absolutely all nuclear tests. We deem the prohibition of any nuclear-weapon test explosion or any other nuclear explosion to be clear enough to encompass all the activities which we want to forbid.

The historic joint action by the Parties to the Tlatelolco and Rarotonga Treaties, the upcoming establishment of the treaty on the African nuclear-weapon-free zone and the Declaration on the Denuclearization of the South Atlantic prove the convergence of purpose of southern hemisphere countries in the area of non-proliferation and disarmament. It is now realistic to envisage the whole southern hemisphere as a zone free of nuclear weapons. We are confident that progress in nuclear disarmament and the formation of new nuclear-weapon-free zones will gradually eliminate the threat of nuclear weapons.

The agenda of the First Committee is vast and sometimes unwieldy. I have addressed a few of its most important items: the rationalization of our work, nuclear testing and zones free of nuclear weapons. We will present our views on the other points in the course of the discussion of each cluster. Members can be assured of the full cooperation of the Brazilian delegation for the good progress of our work.

Mr. Sychou (Belarus) (*interpretation from Russian*): Allow me at the outset, Sir, to associate myself with the congratulations that have been extended here on your election to the responsible and lofty post of Chairman of the First Committee. You may be assured of my delegation's active cooperation.

The year that has elapsed since the General Assembly's last session has been eventful. Much time will be required to determine the subsequent evolution of a number of important trends shaping today's international prospects. Today, the most important factors setting the tempo for laying the foundations of the international system of collective security include the elimination of nuclear weapons, the prevention of the spread of weapons of mass destruction and active steps in the field of microdisarmament, with all the inherent difficulties and vagaries of this process, with which we are so familiar.

Recognizing the importance of synchronizing the process of disarmament with radical political transformations and the changing conditions for ensuring national security, the world has followed intensely the adaptations to the rapidly changing international realities in this area which States of various regions have implemented in their policies. The Republic of Belarus made its contribution to the formation of such policies last year. We are aware of the attention which our partners are devoting to the Republic's disarmament activities and their inherent difficulties. We are therefore attempting to bring our efforts to tangible fruition.

By adhering in 1992 as a non-nuclear-weapon State to the START I Treaty and signing the Lisbon Protocol to it, we established a precedent that was followed by the other States of the Commonwealth of Independent States. As a result, thanks to the efforts of Russia, the United States, Belarus, Kazakstan and Ukraine, the entry into force of START I was assured in December 1994.

On 9 February 1995, Belarus ratified the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction. In May, Belarus became a sponsor of the decision of the Review and Extension Conference of the States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) to extend the Treaty indefinitely. By having earlier removed tactical nuclear weapons from our territory, we strengthened our moral position in support of a further phased reduction of the world's nuclear arsenals. Thus, in favouring the indefinite extension of the NPT, Belarus believed that this decision was made as part of a "package" which posits a strengthening of the review process of the implementation of the Treaty's provisions, of affirmed principles and the objectives of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament.

Belarus declared a moratorium, extending from 1 September to the end of 1997, on the export of anti-personnel land-mines. On 15 October 1995, despite a significant appropriation of resources intended for other vitally important sectors of the economy, we resumed the implementation of our obligations under the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE). The temporary suspension which preceded this was understandable given that, during the winter months — when, because of the complex economic situation, there was a shortage of energy even for heating kindergartens, and the factories were working non-stop — the situation was clearly abnormal. By the most recent calculations, work on the reduction in Belarus of armoured transports, in accordance with the CFE Treaty, will require approximately $230 million. Speaking frankly, in a Republic where as much as 20 per cent of the national budget is and will for the foreseeable future be allocated to overcoming the consequences of the disaster at the Chernobyl nuclear power station, this is an unaffordable luxury.

We hope that our partners sense and understand the specific nature of the problems of reducing weapons in Belarus in the current economic conditions. We would hope that they will also demonstrate due understanding of the fact that this process is by no means automatic. It is, rather, an expression of our political will to create a safer world.

It is perfectly obvious that in such a situation, the planned reduction of military technology received by Belarus as a legacy of the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) requires substantial external support. Therefore, it was no accident that Belarus proposed to establish a fund for assistance to States whose economies are experiencing an excessive burden in connection with the elimination of military technology within the framework of the Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) Treaty. That idea, incidentally, is in keeping with the proposal of the Nobel Prize laureate Oscar Arias Sánchez of Costa Rica regarding the establishment of a global fund for demilitarization, which he made last week at the United Nations.

Having regularly provided to the United Nations, beginning in 1993, information on military expenditures for the past financial year for which such data are available, we are particularly interested in such fields as the ecologically safe destruction of weapons and the conversion of military potential to civilian needs, *inter alia* in favour of the stable economic and social development of States.

We cannot fail to note the negative impact on this process of actions that provoke a recurrence of the bloc policy, which is particularly dangerous in Europe. We therefore attach the utmost importance to strengthening the role and effectiveness of United Nations activity as a central element in the system of collective security and an effective instrument for the maintenance of international peace and, in Europe, for the enhancement of the role of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

As is well known, the Republic of Belarus is a firm supporter of international initiatives to establish nuclear-weapon-free zones, considering them as an important factor in the strengthening of regional and global military and political stability. We believe we have no right to ignore the danger of attempts to expand the geographical borders of regional blocs, attempts which, as is well known, can and do involve the potential for destabilization. By removing nuclear weapons from our territory, we are reacting with great sensitivity to any possible changes in the geography of the deployment of nuclear weapons.

Nor can we ignore the negative factors in the area of nuclear disarmament, which have been manifest recently in the activities of certain States. Any resumption of nuclear testing threatens to bring about a chain reaction leading to a review by other States of their approaches to the agreed principles of non-proliferation, as well as to their obligations to reject nuclear programmes likely to undermine the adherence of States to other decisions taken by the 1995 NPT Review Conference. The position of Belarus on this question has been stated in the declaration of its Ministry of Foreign Affairs dated 9 September last, distributed as an official document of the current session of the General Assembly (A/50/524). Belarus regards nuclear tests as a step towards the vertical spread of nuclear weapons, which would create a dangerous situation of mutual distrust and suspicion and provoke other nuclear-weapon Powers to embark on that course.

The possibilities for the direct use of the newest achievements of science and technology for the purposes of creating more sophisticated types and systems of weapons, particularly in the nuclear field, where the laboratory simulation of nuclear explosions creates conditions for removing the process of the qualitative enhancement of nuclear weapons from international control, dictates the need to draw up new international agreements covering this area. Thus, in this context, the maximum restraint of nuclear-weapon States towards nuclear testing is a matter of prime significance, and an indispensable condition for the

speedy conclusion — no later than autumn 1996 — of work on the comprehensive test-ban treaty. This must include commitments regarding a complete ban on nuclear testing by all States, in all environments and in perpetuity. Our unequivocal support also goes to the unilateral moratoriums declared and strictly complied with by the United Kingdom, Russia and the United States.

The attitude to the comprehensive test-ban treaty and progress towards nuclear disarmament, and the provision of security guarantees to non-nuclear-weapon States, which has acquired particular significance in the context of the indefinite extension of the NPT, is today attested to by the political adherence of all States to their disarmament obligations. Given its rejection of any real possibility of acquiring nuclear weapons, the interests of assuring the independence and protecting the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Belarus create a need for guarantees against the use or threat of use of force, including the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. In this connection, we welcome the adoption by the five nuclear-weapon Powers of unilateral declarations on security guarantees to non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons, as well as the adoption by the Security Council of resolution 984 (1995) as important steps towards the drawing up and conclusion of a legally binding international instrument in this field. Belarus favours the speedy adoption of an international instrument covering both positive and negative guarantees to States.

We also fully support the idea of the convening in 1996 in Moscow of a conference on nuclear security.

We would also wish to highlight as a high-priority objective the need for further reductions in nuclear arsenals, the strengthening of the non-proliferation regime in all types of weapons of mass destruction, and the conclusion of a treaty prohibiting the production of fissionable materials for nuclear-weapons purposes that would have a legally binding character.

Belarus is interested in expanding its opportunities to participate in the appropriate negotiating process within the framework of an expanded membership of the Conference on Disarmament. In this context, we support the decision of the Conference on Disarmament regarding the expansion of its membership as soon as possible. At the same time, we cannot fail to express regret that this year again the question of the expansion of the Conference on Disarmament has not been implemented in practical terms.

We also hope that our efforts to agree upon actions within the framework of the convention on stability in Europe, and also our support for the idea of preparing a treaty on European security will be recognized by our partners. For our part, we are undertaking all possible efforts to consolidate the unique social and political stability of Belarus, considering this as our contribution to the positive evolution of the situation in the subregion.

As reaffirmation of our position on the questions I have mentioned, Belarus has become a sponsor of a number of draft resolutions covering the entire range of disarmament problems. Allow me once again to assure you, Mr. Chairman, of our cooperation and the readiness of my delegation to do all it can to promote the successful conclusion of the work of the First Committee.

The Chairman: The last speaker is the Observer of Switzerland, on whom I now call.

Mr. Desarzens (Switzerland) *(interpretation from French)*: Allow me at the outset, Sir, to congratulate you on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee. Your extensive professional experience will guarantee the success of the Committee's work.

I should like to begin with two general comments. First, all the Swiss positions in the area of arms control and disarmament are based on our firm conviction that peace and international security cannot be assured through an arms race. Secondly, disarmament treaties and arms limitation treaties must be balanced, verifiable and universal. For this principle to be respected, these treaties must therefore provide for the security of all States and, at the very least, that of the States parties.

Allow me now to make a few remarks on the events of this year. The Review and Extension Conference of the States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) will be noted as a major event. It allowed States parties to reaffirm, during frank debates and through a resolution, the principles and objectives of non-proliferation and of nuclear disarmament, as well as the important role this Treaty plays in the control of nuclear weapons.

In order to ensure a strong non-proliferation regime, Switzerland has associated itself with the desire of the majority of States parties to extend the NPT for an indefinite period. Our vote, however, is accompanied by the firm expectation that the nuclear-weapon Powers will

fully honour all their promises concerning article VI of the Treaty.

It is in this context that the Federal Council regrets the recent resumption of nuclear tests by two Powers of this type, entailing the risk of serious delay in the global efforts at non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament and causing major disappointment for all the non-nuclear States which agreed to indefinite extension of the NPT in the expectation that the nuclear-weapon States would demonstrate the greatest restraint until the conclusion of a treaty on a complete ban on tests.

Nevertheless, Switzerland greatly hopes that the Conference on Disarmament will successfully conclude its negotiations on a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty as quickly as possible and that until then all the nuclear Powers will respect a moratorium on tests.

Cessation of the production of fissionable materials for explosive purposes is another subject of concern for the Conference at the present time. We welcome the establishment of an *ad hoc* committee with a mandate to negotiate a non-discriminatory multilateral treaty that is internationally and effectively verifiable to ban the production of fissionable materials for explosive purposes. We regret that the Conference on Disarmament was unable to choose a chairman for that special committee — the prelude to real negotiations on the subject during this year's session. Blocking the nomination of a chairman for this Committee is tantamount to preventing negotiations on a specific nuclear-disarmament measure, and it sends a wrong signal.

The decision of 21 September to adopt the report submitted in 1993 by Ambassador Paul O'Sullivan and recommendations in that report regarding the membership of the Conference on Disarmament are a first step towards raising that body to the level of a universal forum. This decision will serve as the basis on which the Conference on Disarmament will be able henceforth to assume the full significance that is its right. We earnestly hope that this principled decision will be rapidly followed by specific action. Indeed, that would enable candidates for adherence to enjoy all the rights and assume all the obligations of member States at the earliest possible time.

We sincerely hope that the Biological Weapons Convention will be supplemented with an instrument for effective verification. This is why Switzerland, from the very outset, has participated in the discussions to that end. We realize that, for technical reasons linked to the nature of biological agents, complete and reliable verification is hardly possible in that field, and we therefore support measures that put the emphasis on strengthening and improving respect for that Convention. It goes without saying that such measures must be legally binding, must provide for challenge inspections and must not unduly hamper the activities of civilian industry or scientific research. We hope to see the Biological Weapons Convention supplemented by such a regime in the near future.

According to the initial estimates of signatory States, the Chemical Weapons Convention should have entered into force by the beginning of this year. However, the volume of the preparatory work for its implementation was clearly underestimated, and the ratification process therefore got off to a rather slow start. On 10 March Switzerland became the twenty-seventh State to ratify that Convention — the main instrument for checking the proliferation of chemical weapons. We note with satisfaction that the rate of ratifications has speeded up during recent weeks and that the Convention's entry into force next year still seems possible. It seems to us that if that is to happen it is crucial that the two States which possess the most significant chemical arsenals, and which have played an extremely important role in the conclusion of this Convention, should complete their national ratification procedures as quickly as possible.

The rediscovery of what could be called "micro-disarmament" is one of the new phenomena of the past few years. This is a consequence of the re-emergence of conventional wars in the third world outside of Europe, with all that is entailed by these vile and unbearable fratricidal conflicts and the means that they use. The Review Conference of the State Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons, which has just concluded in Vienna, provided for the adoption of a new protocol relating to blinding laser weapons. Although this Protocol does not completely ban the use of lasers directed against the human eye, its adoption is an important marker for the future.

On the other hand, Switzerland deplores the failure of the negotiations concerning the improvement of Protocol II, which relates to land-mines. The progress that is essential in this area — extension of the field of application to internal conflicts; the detectability of mines; self-destruct machinery; effective restrictions on transfers; and verification machinery — was not achieved despite considerable efforts. It is therefore essential that in the

months to come Governments reconsider their positions with a view to opening the way to agreement during the next stage of the Review Conference. Otherwise, efforts to control the problem of mines will come to naught once and for all.

The Chairman: I appeal to all representatives to be here at the time scheduled so that meetings can begin promptly. I would also ask delegations to dispense with the customary congratulatory remarks. Naturally, I shall assume that the kind sentiments are implied.

The meeting rose at noon.

United Nations

A/C.1/50/PV.5

General Assembly

Fiftieth session

Official Records

First Committee

5th Meeting

Tuesday, 17 October 1995, 3 p.m.

New York

Chairman: Erdenechuluun (Mongolia)

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda items 57 to 81 ***(continued)***

General debate on all disarmament and international security agenda items

Mr. Cárdenas (Argentina) (*interpretation from Spanish*): On behalf of my delegation and on my own behalf, I wish to congratulate you, Sir, and the members of the Bureau at this session of the First Committee.

Very important events in the field of disarmament and the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction have taken place this year. I am referring to the all-important decision of the international community to extend indefinitely the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). In this respect, my country joined at an early date the 180 States, out of the 185 Members of the United Nations, which decided together to extend the Treaty indefinitely and unconditionally. This firm step taken by the majority of the international community consolidates the aspiration of many to a world free of weapons of mass destruction.

My country's efforts to build a reliable system for ensuring international peace and security are fully recognized by the international community. They are, in fact, a central pillar of the Argentine Republic's foreign policy, which first took shape in the context of our own region.

Together with Brazil, the Argentine Republic has made progress towards a thorough coordination of our respective nuclear policies. In this context, a series of bilateral agreements have been reached. The establishment of the first bi-national monitoring agency in the nuclear field — the Brazilian-Argentine Agency for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials — was a specific result of these agreements, as was the Quadripartite Agreement of complete safeguards with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

Hence, our respective nuclear programmes are today transparent, not only as regards Argentina and Brazil, but also *vis-à-vis* the rest of the world. Since June 1994, joint inspections by the Brazilian-Argentine Agency and the IAEA have been carried out. Furthermore, my country promoted — in this case, alongside Brazil and Chile — those actions required to accede to the Treaty of Tlatelolco. Today, over 30 years after its creation, the Treaty is being strengthened and extended, making it possible to envisage the consolidation of a nuclear-weapon-free zone covering Latin America and the Caribbean. In this framework, we welcome the fact that the Cuban Government has signed this international instrument. We firmly believe that all these regional milestones are effective means of strengthening the system of collective security established by the Charter of this Organization.

We view with extreme concern the conducting of nuclear-test programmes. We share the profound, collective international aspiration to see, in 1996, the completion of the comprehensive test-ban treaty, without time-limits or permissible exceptions. Absolutely committed to this goal, the Argentine Republic is actively participating in the negotiations on the comprehensive test-ban treaty. In this respect, my country will host, from 20 to 22 November

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1995, the workshop of the Group of Scientific Experts on seismic events, of the Conference on Disarmament. The aim is to interest and involve the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean and Mexico in the third technical experiment of the Group of seismic experts by providing information on stations located on their territories, previously selected as auxiliaries, and for them to join under the best possible conditions the seismic-monitoring system of the future comprehensive test-ban treaty. I wish to stress that the organization of the workshop has been delegated to the National Institute for Seismic Prevention, headquartered in San Juan. It is being sponsored jointly by the Group of seismic experts and the Argentine Foreign Ministry.

Furthermore, we firmly support the determined initiation by the Conference on Disarmament of negotiations on a convention on the prohibition of fissionable material — the cut-off convention. We also urge the implementation of the decision by the Conference on Disarmament on the adoption of the report submitted during its plenary meeting on 12 August 1993. We recognize the legitimate aspirations of the candidate countries to participate fully in the work of the Conference on Disarmament, as established in resolution 49/77 B.

The Argentine Republic supports the Secretary-General's urgent appeal for full international compliance with the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction. On 2 October, my country deposited its instrument of ratification of this Convention. This is yet another step consistent with our non-proliferation philosophy. Through this act, Argentina consolidates externally measures already adopted domestically. I am referring to my country's decision to assume strict control of the exportation of chemical substances. This is being implemented through the equally stringent application of the regulations contained in Decree 603/92.

I wish to point out that the Argentina position was clearly reflected in the Mendoza Declaration, which was signed on 5 September 1991 by Argentina, Brazil and Chile. In that context, a thorough process of consultations has begun among the signatory countries with the aim of coordinating positions and drafting measures for the non-proliferation of this type of weapon in the region.

Argentina is participating in the Preparatory Commission for the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons in The Hague. We are determined to play an active role in that organization. In this respect, we have already established domestically an interministerial group — with the participation of officials in the areas of defence, the economy and foreign relations — for the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention in Argentina.

In this framework we should also include the International Seminar on the Non-Proliferation of Chemical and Bacteriological Weapons, held in Buenos Aires on 15 and 16 November 1994. Organized by the Argentine Republic, Australia, Canada, Norway and the United States, it aimed at an exchange of opinion among the countries of Latin America and the Australia Group. The Seminar was the first of its kind to be held in the region and was useful for an exchange of ideas on export controls as an element in the campaign against the proliferation of this type of weapon of mass destruction.

The Republic of Argentina attaches special importance to the Convention banning biological weapons. We would like the ad hoc group established by the Special Conference of the States Parties to the Convention on bacteriological weapons to continue its work so that it will be possible to conclude a verification protocol that will improve and strengthen the Convention.

The Review Conference of the States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons was concluded this month in Vienna. In this connection, I would like to inform the Committee that on 2 October of this year my country deposited its instrument of ratification of that international treaty. We regret that at the Conference it was not possible to reach agreement on strengthening Protocol II of that international instrument. On the other hand, we applaud the adoption of the text of the new Protocol of the Convention, on blinding laser weapons, in spite of its limited scope of application.

The Republic of Argentina has associated itself with the efforts made by this Organization to try to resolve the international humanitarian crisis brought on by the use of anti-personnel mines. My country pays especial attention to this subject because of its devastating consequences for the civilian population. In this connection, by its executive decree 435 of this year, Argentina endorsed resolution 48/75 K adopted by the General Assembly on 16 December 1993 suspending the export, sale or transfer of all types of anti-personnel mines, without exception. Argentina imposed the ban for a period of five years.

We consider that resolution 49/215, entitled "Assistance in mine clearance", constitutes an important link in the international chain that has been established to eliminate the lingering effects of the planting of anti-personnel mines. We are deeply satisfied by the international community's response to this serious problem. The presence of 100 States and 60 organizations at the international gathering on mine clearance, held in Geneva from 5 to 7 July, clearly shows the will of States to increase their political and financial support for efforts to stop the spread of such weapons.

With pledges amounting to $22 million, as announced at that international gathering, the voluntary trust fund for assistance in mine clearance can become operational. In this context, Argentina requested at that international meeting that its contribution for the de-mining of the Malvinas be considered a contribution to that trust fund. It should be recalled that the trust fund was established under resolution 48/7, which was co-sponsored by my country and formally adopted on 19 October 1993 by the General Assembly.

Following this robust action by my country in this area, the Government of Argentina contacted the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, offering to take charge of clearing the mines planted in the Malvinas during the 1982 conflict. This offer has been reflected in document A/49/76, and, I reiterate, it is *ex gratia* in nature.

Similarly, on 9 August 1995 the Government of Argentina offered to the Mine Clearance and Policy Unit of the United Nations Department of Humanitarian Affairs the cooperation of qualified personnel of the Argentine armed forces for possible participation in every stage of mine clearance undertaken by the Organization.

The proliferation of conventional weapons urgently requires the constant attention of the international community. In this respect, sharing the view expressed by the Secretary-General in his report, we believe that the regular submission of reports to the Register of Conventional Arms is a useful way of strengthening the system of mutual trust between States, through the reporting of legal transfers of conventional weapons by States for defence purposes.

Since the establishment of the Register of Conventional Arms, the Republic of Argentina has reported not only on its arms transfers but also on its stocks of military *materiel*. In this way we are strengthening, at the regional and international levels, the system of global security provided for in Chapter VIII of the Charter.

In order to control contraband in nuclear material, States must take internal measures, such as changing their accounting systems. We support the efforts made by the IAEA to deal with this alarming problem.

Finally, I wish to highlight the fact that all the actions taken by the Republic of Argentina to prevent the proliferation of chemical, biological, nuclear and ballistic weapons constituted the ideological foundation for promoting in timely fashion, and within the framework of this Organization — more specifically, within the Security Council — the submission of a draft resolution ratifying the original jurisdiction of the Security Council with regard to non-proliferation, and updating the statement made in 1992 when the Heads of State rightly affirmed, in this building, that the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction constituted a threat to international peace and security.

Mr. Starr (Australia): I would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the Chair of this Committee and to assure you of the full cooperation of the Australian delegation.

Half a century after the establishment of the United Nations, we can see clearly the imprint which it has left on international affairs, in particular on international security issues.

Unlike its predecessor, the League of Nations, whose entire life span amounted to a brief 20-year interval between two World Wars, the United Nations has taken root and matured to such an extent that today it is difficult, if not impossible, to envision a world without it.

What we have seen steadily and quietly growing over the past five decades, even through the depths of the nuclear shadows and proxy conflicts of the cold war, has been the habits of global community and collective security — a collective security which recognizes that a world operating according to agreed norms of international behaviour is infinitely preferable to international lawlessness; a collective security based on the belief that limited concessions of national freedom of action produce tangible benefits for the economic and political welfare of all; and, of critical importance, a vision of collective security to which the vast majority of the international community has been prepared to pledge itself and its resources.

It is the concrete and repeated renewal by individual States of that commitment to the international common good which has caused the United Nations to endure, just as certainly as it was lack of that same commitment which caused the League to founder. For the League did not founder on lack of ideals or mechanisms; rather, it foundered on a lack of concrete commitment to implement, maintain and, where necessary, refurbish these founding ideals. Within two decades, loss of energy among Member States, reflected in a series of political set-backs, none of which was fatal in itself, was sufficient to obliterate all the visionary promise of 1919 and the resolve to end wars.

I make these points not just because of our Organization's fiftieth anniversary, but rather because, in the year since we last met, the vast majority of States represented in this room participated in the indefinite extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), and agreed on a series of related measures — notably on the Principles and Objectives which we intend to follow in our future pursuit of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament, and on an enhanced treaty review process.

In a sense, the NPT — and the decision to extend it indefinitely — represent the best and most effective fruit of our post-war search for collective security. The Treaty has, during half the life of the United Nations itself, restrained the rush to nuclear proliferation and the emergence of new nuclear-weapon States. Even in the depths of the cold war, the commitment to a world free of nuclear weapons which it enshrines stood as a compelling rejection of the notion of vertical proliferation and of the nuclear arms race. We have now decided that the principles of nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament, on which we have agreed within the NPT, should be entrenched indefinitely and irrevocably; and we have called on those few States that still remain outside the community of the NPT to join with us under the authority of the Treaty in this task.

However, we will succeed in entrenching these principles only if, collectively, our deeds follow our words, if the undertakings we have all made in our collective interest are honoured faithfully. The real achievement of the Review Conference held in May in New York was, not simply to consolidate the nuclear non-proliferation achievements of the past, but to recommit ourselves to implementation of the Treaty in all its aspects in the decades to come, with the ultimate goal of the complete elimination of nuclear weapons. We have refurbished our objectives and renewed our commitment, and we must reinvigorate our pursuit of international security while the shadow of nuclear war still remains.

Our first commitment is clear, namely completion of the comprehensive test-ban treaty as soon as possible, and certainly no later than 1996. In practice, the treaty needs to be available for signature by the autumn of 1996, that is, at the commencement of the fifty-first session of the General Assembly. Our message to the Conference on Disarmament must be unequivocal if we are to achieve this goal. The Conference will have to sign off by the end of June 1996 on a completed text, which can then be forwarded to this body — meeting in reconvened session — for endorsement so that preparations for signature can commence by the outset of the fifty-first session in September.

We all know that the window of political opportunity demands pursuit of such a time-frame, and that there is a convergence of views on this matter among negotiators. We all appreciate the potency of the political symbolism in the fact that in one of its last acts at its fiftieth session, the General Assembly would endorse our collective determination to end nuclear testing for ever. Thus, Australia looks forward to joining with others this year, under the leadership of Mexico, in presenting a draft resolution which seeks to entrench these expectations as the collective and consensus view of the international community.

We also call on all delegations to recognize that the achievement of this negotiating objective will require a determined effort and a basic desire to reach consensus, particularly on the scope of the agreement. Australia, together with the great majority of the other negotiators, has sought a truly comprehensive "zero yield" ban on tests. We are now close to having all five of the permanent members of the Security Council on record as accepting a "zero yield" ban. We call for the consolidation of this consensus, and for this to be expressed in final convergence on the text of the scope article before the intersessional negotiations in January. We do not have time for debilitating discussion at this late stage on whether or not we are, after all, really pursuing the comprehensive ban agreed in the negotiating mandate and called for by the international community.

At this critical stage in our collective search for a more secure world free of nuclear weapons and in the finalizing of the comprehensive test-ban treaty, the continuation of nuclear testing by China and the recommencement of nuclear testing by France in the South

Pacific are aberrations, belonging to a different era and to the logic of nuclear confrontation in a world we have deliberately and decisively put behind us.

Like the vast majority of the peoples and nations of the planet, Australia cannot accept the idea that continued or resumed nuclear testing — no matter who conducts it — can in any sense make it easier to consolidate recent progress in nuclear disarmament, to demonstrate the conclusive end to the nuclear arms race, or to achieve a comprehensive test-ban treaty. This was self-evident to us all in New York five months ago, and is reflected in the language we agreed upon here by consensus.

Australia congratulates those three nuclear-weapon States which are maintaining testing moratoriums. We condemn the decisions made by the Governments of the other two nuclear-weapon States to carry out nuclear explosions — in one case within days of the indefinite extension of the NPT. Australia has unequivocally condemned each subsequent nuclear test, regardless of where it has occurred. These test explosions fly in the face of the unambiguous wishes of the international community, and of the commitment undertaken by all nuclear-weapon States — expressed so clearly in article VI of the NPT — to pursue negotiations in good faith with a view to the cessation of the nuclear arms race and the eventual elimination of nuclear weapons.

In matters of collective security and nuclear non-proliferation, it is not enough to enjoin the rest of the world to "do what I say, not what I do". We expect the General Assembly to pronounce in unambiguous terms on these tests, conveying clearly its intention that our collective pursuit of the future should not be encumbered by individual failures to let go of the past.

The refurbishment of international security objectives at the NPT Review Conference in May also included important progress in areas such as that of security assurances for non-nuclear-weapon States, notwithstanding the procedural failure to conclude a final document reflecting the considerable progress made on this subject. States parties to the NPT separately noted the importance of Security Council resolution 984 (1995) and of the parallel declarations made by nuclear-weapon States. Furthermore, they had specifically agreed on the need to consider further steps — which could take the form of an internationally legally binding instrument — to assure non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the Treaty against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons.

The consolidation and enhancement of international norms on security assurances would be an important step in reasserting and entrenching our common understanding that the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States which are in compliance with binding and verified international non-proliferation instruments is unthinkable, and not to be tolerated. We look for this progress to be recognized in resolutions this year. We also look for progress in implementing further steps, in particular through further Security Council action, or the enhanced review process agreed upon for the NPT.

Australia supports the immediate commencement and early conclusion of negotiations on a non-discriminatory and universally applicable cut-off convention, banning the production of fissile material for explosive purposes, a further element of the nuclear disarmament programme agreed in May. It is clear to all concerned that the Conference on Disarmament has agreed on a negotiating mandate. We find it curious that after years of striving towards this objective, it is now some non-nuclear-weapon States that seem to have reservations regarding the commencement of negotiations, even though these would permit discussion of existing stocks. We have a window of opportunity now which we would be well advised not to squander.

We agreed, in New York in May, to the determined pursuit of global reduction of nuclear weapons, with the ultimate goal of their elimination, and of general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control. In Australia s view, the most appropriate forum in which to pursue and take stock of the concrete implementation of the first element of this undertaking will be the enhanced review process agreed for the Treaty, commencing in 1997, where all participants are committed to shared non-proliferation and disarmament objectives.

At the same time, we are not opposed to addressing issues of nuclear disarmament in other forums. We appreciate the value of unilateral, bilateral and plurilateral steps which might be taken, including those from internal discussions amongst the five nuclear-weapon States. We are sensitive to the need to draw all members of the international community — including current non-parties to the NPT — into a productive dialogue on how we might act in concert to progress towards the goal of a nuclear-weapon-free world.

What is clear is the intention of the international community by 1997 to have well in hand, concrete

strategies to consolidate steps taken over the next two years, and to support plans of nuclear-weapon States to press forward with new significant cuts in nuclear-weapons holdings.

Concrete steps are being taken in promoting nuclear-weapon-free zones. In May, the States Parties to the NPT gave a resounding encouragement to the development of these zones. Australia welcomes expressions of support given by nuclear-weapon States to specific nuclear-weapon-free zones in that context. It welcomes in particular, indications from the United States that it is moving towards a final decision on adherence to the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty, a treaty which is of special importance and significance to Australia and its fellow South Pacific Forum members. We also call on the other nuclear-weapon States which have not yet adhered to the relevant protocols — France and the United Kingdom — to do so without further delay, recognizing the uncompromising support which the region has afforded to the cause of non-proliferation. Like other South Pacific Forum States, we urge France to close permanently its nuclear test facilities in the South Pacific.

We warmly acknowledge the hard diplomatic effort which has gone into completing adherence to the Treaty of Tlatelolco. We welcome the conclusion of the negotiations for the African nuclear- weapon-free-zone treaty, and look forward to its early signature. The entry into force of this treaty will dramatically crystallize the important progress made in the last decade in rendering Africa a continent free of nuclear weapons. We look forward to the finalization by neighbours to our near north of negotiations to establish a South-East Asian nuclear-weapon-free zone with the support of the nuclear-weapon States. We are, in effect, seeing the steady growth of a series of complementary regional arrangements — perhaps becoming even hemispheric in effect for the southern half of the globe — which underpin the international non-proliferation regime and give it a distinctive regional commitment.

In refurbishing our collective commitments, it is timely to reconsider how effectively our multilateral arms control and disarmament machinery has been responding. Australia was gratified that the Conference on Disarmament has been able to agree in principle to the expansion of its membership. Once implemented — and this decisive step should not be allowed to slip — it should give the Conference a renewed vigour and extended authority in addressing its various negotiating tasks.

Australia finds it curious and unacceptable, however, that in general our standing multilateral disarmament machinery continues to avoid dealing substantively with non-nuclear disarmament, most notably the problems posed by conventional weapons and forces. Disarmament, if it is to be effective, must affect us all. It must take in, not just the weapons systems which potentially threaten the continued existence of life on the planet, but also those which actually kill thousands annually in the real world.

We commend the contribution being made here by the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms, and wholeheartedly subscribe to the support for the exercise from our region reflected in the statement made by the Chairman of the ASEAN Regional Forum on 1 August 1995. On the other hand, we call on the Conference on Disarmament to cut through the procedural obstructions preventing such discussions in that forum, and on colleagues to consider also the possibility of reinvigorating the work of the Disarmament Commission to ensure new productive work in all these real issues.

Ad hoc forums such as the Review Conference on the inhumane weapons Convention also play important roles. We welcome agreement in Vienna to an additional Protocol for the Convention which would ban the use and transfer of blinding laser weapons. However, we were deeply disappointed that disagreement on a number of limited but significant advances in the protection of civilians from long-lived anti-personnel land-mines has not yet been achieved. Australia is committed to the elimination of all anti-personnel land-mines as an ultimate goal, and to the immediate implementation of practical medium-term measures which might advance us in some worthwhile way towards our collective objective. The Review Conference must succeed in its resumed sessions to take steps which will contribute, seriously, to preventing future humanitarian disasters.

In dealing with both nuclear and conventional disarmament issues, the mutually-reinforcing interaction of regional and global initiatives is important in consolidating progress. In Australia's neighbourhood, the ASEAN Regional Forum is making significant steps in demonstrating regional commitment to collective and cooperative security, and to habits of transparency and peaceful coexistence which will stand us in good stead for the future. Ongoing support by the United Nations — for example through the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific, based in Kathmandu — for such regional development is important, and is appreciated.

Australia is also pleased to be able to participate in other regional initiatives, such as the Middle East Arms Control and Regional Security Working Group, which seeks creatively to underpin the Middle East peace process.

In my introductory comments I sought to emphasize the need for the international community, not simply to codify ideals, but to maintain an ongoing and concrete commitment to their implementation.

Nowhere is this more important today than in the context of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). Many of us here were engaged in the historic push to conclude this, the first global multilateral instrument to provide a verifiable ban on a whole class of weapons, and to provide for their destruction. But to be effective in achieving the disarmament objectives of the negotiators, this instrument must be speedily ratified by the major possessors of stocks, namely Russia and the United States. Episodes of chemical terrorism have underlined to us that there is no room for complacency in international security issues such as these. The norm of chemical non-proliferation and the destruction of all chemical weapons established in the CWC needs to be asserted unambiguously and authoritatively by actions on the part of the majors, actions which effectively propel the treaty into force.

With regard to the biological weapons Convention, it is incumbent upon us to strive, despite the constraints of the international disarmament calendar, to develop a coherent and effective verification mechanism as rapidly as possible. Recent revelations made concerning previous activities by Iraq, indicative of systematic breaches of the Convention, graphically underscore the need to refurbish and reinforce the norms of the Convention, and to deter, emphatically, their future violation. It is not enough that we have a Convention in place; we must reinforce verifiable commitment to the implementation of its provisions.

We have an important international security agenda ahead at this fiftieth session of the General Assembly. In today's world, there is no viable alternative to a collective security built on mutual trust and collective commitment. There is no room for complacent reliance on past achievements or empty statements of ideals, for withdrawal from the process which continually shapes and implements international norms, or for disregard of the solemn political and legal commitments which are the basis of our security, present and future. There is room for imagination, and hard work, to capture fully the considerable opportunities of these times in which we are privileged to live. The Australian delegation will make every effort to contribute fully to this process.

Mr. Sha Zukang (China) (*interpretation from Chinese*): At the outset, please allow me to congratulate you on behalf of the Chinese delegation on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee of the current session of the General Assembly. We have full confidence that with your outstanding talent and rich experience in diplomacy, you will guide the work of the Committee to success. Meanwhile, I wish to congratulate the other members of the Bureau on their elections and express our thanks to His Excellency Ambassador Rodriguez of Ecuador for his contribution to the Committee during his tenure of the chairmanship for the last session.

The current session of the United Nations General Assembly is being held in the year that marks the fiftieth anniversary of victory in the world's anti-Fascist war and of the victory of China's War of Resistance against Japanese invasion, as well as of the founding of the United Nations. For half a century, the United Nations has made commendable efforts in the promotion of disarmament and the maintenance of international peace and security. In this respect, the General Assembly has adopted numerous resolutions on nuclear disarmament, conventional disarmament, the prohibition of biological and chemical weapons, the checking of the arms race, prevention of the militarization of outer space, the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones and zones of peace. The three special sessions devoted to disarmament and the Final Document adopted by the first special session on disarmament in particular, facilitated progress in the field of disarmament. In the United Nations and other multilateral forums, a series of important disarmament agreements, such as the Biological Weapons Convention and the Chemical Weapons Convention, were reached, thereby leading mankind step by step towards a world free of all forms of weapons of mass destruction.

Since the last session of the General Assembly, thanks to the efforts of all countries, further progress has been made in the field of disarmament and arms control. Five months ago, the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) decided to extend the Treaty indefinitely. That decision is conducive to the prevention of the proliferation of nuclear weapons and to the maintenance of international peace and security, and should give new currency to the process of nuclear disarmament. On the other hand, that decision should not interpreted as allowing the perpetual possession of nuclear weapons by the nuclear-

weapon States. Security Council resolution 984 (1995), on the provision of security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States, should serve as a new starting-point for negotiations on legally-binding international instruments on the non-use or non-threat-of-use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States. All participants in the Geneva Conference on Disarmament are working hard for the early conclusion of a good comprehensive test-ban treaty and have set up an ad hoc committee on the cut-off convention. Meanwhile, signatories to the Chemical Weapons Convention are intensifying their efforts to ratify it. However, we have to be aware of the fact that disarmament still has a long way to go. The existing treaties on nuclear-weapon reduction have yet to be implemented. The gigantic nuclear arsenals remain practically intact. Some nuclear-weapon States still insist on their policies of nuclear deterrence and are continuing with their research and development of space weapons. To promote the objective of the total prohibition and thorough destruction of all nuclear weapons, Mr. Qian Qichen, Vice-Premier and Foreign Minister of China, proposed at the last session of the General Assembly that a convention on the comprehensive prohibition of nuclear weapons should be concluded. He further put forward a comprehensive set of interrelated nuclear disarmament proposals, including the conclusion of a convention on the non-first-use of nuclear weapons through negotiations among the nuclear-weapon States. China expects to see a positive response from the countries concerned.

China supports the goal of a total ban on nuclear-weapon testing in the context of the complete prohibition and thorough destruction of nuclear weapons. China rejoices at the marked progress achieved on the comprehensive test-ban Treaty in less than two years of negotiations. China believes that that Treaty will be a step towards the ultimate goal of the complete prohibition and thorough destruction of nuclear weapons. The comprehensive test-ban Treaty should have a clearly defined scope providing a comprehensive ban on all nuclear-weapon-test explosions but it should not ban peaceful nuclear explosions or in any way restrict the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. The verification regime of the treaty should be effective, fair and just. China welcomes the substantive progress made on the question of the international monitoring system and believes that the system should be able to provide effective global detection of events that are in violation of the future treaty. National technical means (NTM) have no place in this system, nor should they be a substitute for the international monitoring system. This is an important issue of principle bearing on all States parties and particularly on the realization of equal rights between developing and developed countries that have different levels of such technical means. Furthermore, to ensure the fairness of the verification regime, the organization to be set up under the comprehensive test-ban Treaty must approve requests for on-site inspections and reach conclusions after the inspection. I wish to reiterate here that China attaches great importance to the negotiations on the treaty and will continue to work with all other participating countries for the conclusion of a genuinely good comprehensive treaty as soon as possible, not later than in 1996.

China has long undertaken, unilaterally, not to be the first to use nuclear weapons at any time or in any circumstances. It has also undertaken, unconditionally, not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States and nuclear-weapon-free zones. We strongly appeal to all nuclear- weapon States to enter into immediate negotiations on the conclusion of a treaty on the non-first-use of nuclear weapons and on an agreement on the non-use or non-threat-of-use of such weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States and nuclear-weapon-free zones. These instruments would enhance international peace, stability and security, and therefore be in accordance with the fundamental interests of all countries. China attaches great importance to the issue of non-first-use of nuclear weapons. In this regard, China has presented to the other nuclear-weapon States a draft treaty on the non-first-use of nuclear weapons and calls on those countries to respond positively. In the post-cold-war era of today, it is obviously anachronistic to continue with the policy of nuclear deterrence based on the first-use of nuclear weapons, thereby subjecting other countries to the nuclear threat.

China's possession of a limited number of nuclear weapons is intended solely for self-defence and to fend off nuclear threats. China's nuclear weapons are not directed against any other country. China has no intention of participating, nor has it ever participated, in the nuclear-arms race. China does not belong to any military alliance, nor does it have any foreign nuclear umbrella. While China has long unilaterally undertaken not to be the first to use nuclear weapons, it has all along lived under the shadow of the threat of nuclear weapons. Despite this fact, China has exercised the utmost restraint in nuclear testing and supports a comprehensive ban on nuclear-weapon-test explosions. Once the comprehensive test-ban treaty enters into force, China will discontinue its nuclear-weapon testing.

China consistently supports the aspirations and efforts of the countries concerned in their endeavour to establish

nuclear-weapon-free zones through consultations in which there is equal participation and in the light of the specific conditions of each particular country. In this regard, the Latin American and South Pacific countries have achieved commendable results.

Recently, we have seen welcoming progress in efforts on the part of the African countries with regard to the establishment of the African nuclear-weapon-free zone. China resolutely supports the Treaty on an African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone and will assume its due obligations regarding the African zone, in keeping with its consistent position. It is also our hope that all nuclear-weapon States will equally respect the States of nuclear-weapon-free zones and undertake their due obligations.

The Geneva Conference on Disarmament has set up the Ad Hoc Committee for the cut-off convention. China is ready to work with all the other countries concerned to push forward the work of the Conference on Disarmament in a balanced manner and to contribute to the conclusion of a fair and practicable cut-off convention that will enjoy universal participation and that will be beneficial to the process of nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation.

Ever since the Chemical Weapons Convention was opened for signature, we have seen an increasing number of countries ratifying the Convention. Thanks to the joint efforts of various signatories and the Provisional Technical Secretariat, progress has been achieved on many issues concerning the future implementation of the Convention. Together with all other countries concerned, China will continue to work for a satisfactory solution of such issues as abandoned chemical weapons, challenge inspection and article 11 of the Convention. China supports the purpose and objectives of the Convention and was one of the first signatories. China is now actively preparing for early ratification of the Convention.

China has earnestly and fully implemented its obligations under the Biological Weapons Convention, and has annually reported to the United Nations the required data relevant to the Convention. China supports measures that would strengthen the effectiveness of the Convention. In the light of the special characteristics of biological weapons and the complexity of verification, it is imperative to discuss and formulate necessary definitions and objective criteria, including lists of bacteriological (biological) agents and toxins, so as to clearly differentiate the prohibited activities from those allowed. Only on this basis can there be a meaningful exploration of effective and practicable verification measures. The quick-fix approach of verification for verification's sake will not help enhance the effectiveness of the Convention.

At the recently concluded Review Conference of the Convention on certain conventional weapons, agreement was reached on the addition of a new protocol on the prohibition of blinding weapons. Though falling short of agreement, progress has been made by States parties on amending Protocol II, on land-mines. China is always in favour of humanitarian efforts on the part of the international community to prevent the harm and killing caused to innocent civilians by land-mines. However, at present when the threat of a war of aggression still exists, land-mines are a legitimate means of defence for many countries. Only when consideration is given to both humanitarian concerns and military needs in a balanced manner can we work out practicable and viable solutions to the problem of land-mines. It was in this spirit and taking into account the concerns of all sides as much as possible, that China participated in a positive and serious manner in the relevant negotiations of the Conference of States Parties to the Convention on certain conventional weapons, and it has made its contributions in this regard. We hope that during the resumed session next year, the countries concerned will also be flexible and practical in seeking a just and equitable solution to the existing differences.

Mankind has experienced two global hot wars in the first half of this century and has lived in the shadow of a cold war for at least the past forty years — small wonder that the twentieth century has been described as the "century of wars". In five years' time, the world will ring in the twenty-first century. In order to make the coming century an era of peace and tranquillity, we are pressed with the tasks of further promoting the disarmament process and preserving world peace and security. China will continue to work with all other countries, and make its own contributions to the complete prohibition and thorough destruction of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons, and to the cause of peace for all mankind.

Mr. Calovski (The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia): I would like to congratulate you on your election as Chairman of the First Committee. You can count on my delegation's support and cooperation. I am sure that the Committee will be pleased with the results of the work under your chairmanship. I would like also to congratulate the other members of the Bureau on their election to their posts.

The process of disarmament should be further advanced and developed in all its fields. It is the best preventive effort against future wars and the human tragedies that war brings, and it is the best means of further strengthening international security and all the benefits that peace brings to the development of world-wide cooperation. So, no efforts should be spared to remove the threats to peace and to prevent the occurrence of conflicts. If disarmament is seen in that perspective, it will gain much more in importance; it will become equally important for all countries, large or small, nuclear or non-nuclear, and it will make a much larger contribution to the maintenance of international security and to the efforts to achieve lasting global peace.

It is also extremely important to look at the process of disarmament as an important part of the other regional and global efforts for peace and development. The interdependence of all efforts against war, if followed with the required maturity, political determination and will to prevent conflicts and other human tragedies, will certainly make our actions more resolute and their results more productive. It is essential therefore to stress that many countries do not feel threatened by nuclear war, but are very much concerned for their security because of developments in their surroundings. For that reason the democratization of the process of disarmament, its transparency and all activities aimed at regional and global integration are essential to them and to their development.

This year the First Committee will work on many important issues of arms control and disarmament in an atmosphere conditioned by the results of this year's Review and Extension Conference of States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT); the urgency of the ratification of the Chemical Weapons Convention; the difficulties involved in negotiating the comprehensive test-ban treaty; the developments with regard to nuclear tests, rather than owing to the difficulties involved in developing a global arms-control policy on conventional armaments; failure to stop conflicts and to prevent the occurrence of new ones and so on. It is clear that we will face many contradictory situations in our forthcoming deliberations. The way out will be through maintaining respect for our mutual interests, and applying the determination and political will to develop international relations and cooperation, in accordance with the purposes and principles of the United Nations set forth in the Charter. The observance of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations should influence us to take our deliberations in that direction.

Macedonia attaches the greatest importance to the development of good-neighbourly relations and considers them the most important generator of peace, security, cooperation and disarmament in all regions of the world, particularly in our region — the Balkans. The people of the Balkans deserve to live together in peace with one another as good neighbours. The duty and the interest of Europe is to integrate all of them into the European Community, as soon as possible. That would be the most important contribution to the maintenance of European and global security — but, first, the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina must stop and a political solution to the conflict must be reached. We hope that that will be achieved sooner rather than later.

Under item 81 of our agenda — "Maintenance of international security" — the First Committee will deliberate on the Secretary-General's report on the development of good-neighbourly relations among Balkan States (A/50/412 and Add.1). The report contains the views of some Balkan States and of some others. It contains many interesting suggestions and important opinions. In the course of our discussions of specific subjects relating to international security agenda items, my delegation will speak at length on the subject of the development of good-neighbourly relations among the Balkan States.

Later we shall submit a draft resolution for consideration and adoption by the Committee. At this stage I should like to stress the following points: the development of good-neighbourly relations is the most important factor in the generation of peace and cooperation in the Balkans; every effort — national, regional and global — should be made to steer developments in that direction; further Balkanization of the Balkans is the most serious threat to security in Europe and globally; and it is interesting to note that it is no coincidence that the First World War started in the Balkans and that the Second World War lasted longest in the Balkans. Europeanization of the Balkans should not be delayed; the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina must stop, and a peaceful solution must be reached without delay; normalization of relations between all Balkan States is a must and should be helped and encouraged by the international community.

At this point I should like to stress the importance of the recently concluded accord between the Republic of Macedonia and the Republic of Greece on their future relations. We are sure that the two countries will benefit equally from the accord and that it will have a beneficial effect on future developments in the Balkans.

Last year we underlined the importance of good and timely preparation for the current year's deliberations on this agenda item and on the duties of the Secretariat in that regard. I cannot say that we are pleased with what the Secretariat has prepared. The Secretary-General's report is a technical compilation of the answers received from some States, without its own input and without the views of so many competent international organizations that are daily preoccupied with current and future developments in the Balkans.

We hope that the Secretary-General's next report will contain the necessary input from him and from the many competent international organizations in the United Nations system and those outside the system, particularly in Europe. The thrust of resolution 48/84 B, the draft of which was adopted without a vote by this Committee in 1993, is transformation of the Balkans from a zone of conflict, a barrel-of-gunpowder zone, to a zone of peace and cooperation, as an essential ingredient of European integration.

Is this possible? Our answer to that question is in the affirmative.

This year, as in the past, deliberations on the question of stopping the proliferation of armaments — nuclear, chemical, conventional, and so on — will dominate our proceedings. The positive outcome of this year's Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the NPT — the indefinite extension of the Treaty — represents the most important achievement of the disarmament process. The effort to make the Treaty universal should continue, in the hope of success in not-too-distant future. This achievement should encourage action on the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

We have been following closely the deliberations of the Conference on Disarmament on the banning of nuclear tests. The conclusion of a comprehensive test-ban treaty remains a priority of the Conference on Disarmament, and we hope that the commitment to conclude such a treaty by the year 1996 will be honoured. In this regard, the position of the nuclear States is vital.

My delegation attaches high priority to the control of conventional armaments. Activities in this area of arms control can be of immense help in the confidence-building processes between many States. If this endeavour is to be successful it is essential that, in the field of conventional armaments, there be transparency in production, stockpiling and trading. Our region — the Balkans — is overstocked with all kinds of conventional armaments. We have to remember that future wars will be fought with conventional weapons. The fact is that it is not necessary to have atomic bombs to frighten neighbouring countries: modern conventional weapons are enough.

It is also a fact that it is not difficult to ascertain how much weaponry a country needs for legitimate purposes. If a country accumulates huge quantities of conventional weapons — more than is reasonable — one should normally become worried. The rational policy for the United Nations to advocate is the development of good neighbourly relations, arms control and transparency in armaments production, stockpiling and trading. A conventional arms race is as dangerous to international security as is the nuclear-arms race.

Strengthening collective security is also a good answer to the problem. In this regard we are witnessing positive developments in Europe. The current transformation process in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) could also enhance the forces of peace and cooperation in Europe — a good way of controlling developments in the area of conventional armaments. Here I should like to mention the importance to the future development of European security of implementing the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe.

My delegation shares the view that the Chemical Weapons Convention — the most important achievement so far in the field of disarmament — should be ratified by all States and that it should enter into force without delay.

We support the efforts aimed at banning the production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, as well as the early conclusion of negotiations on a non-discriminatory and universally applicable convention. We hope that the necessary negotiations will begin soon in the Conference on Disarmament. We also support the demand from non-nuclear-weapon States for binding security assurances. We are in favour of regional arms control and disarmament, and we support the establishment of internationally recognized nuclear-weapon-free zones as a means of enhancing global and regional peace and security.

Like many other delegations, my delegation attaches high priority to the question of de-mining. Mine clearance and reconstruction of the affected areas should be undertaken with the utmost urgency. In view of the tremendous humanitarian importance of this endeavour it is absolutely necessary that it be concluded successfully.

Before finishing my statement I should like to comment briefly on the question of expanding the membership of the Conference on Disarmament. With due respect to the Special Rapporteur and the Conference on Disarmament, my delegation shares the view of other delegations that the interest of many countries, including mine, in membership was not taken fully into account. We hope that the Conference on Disarmament will find it possible to consider the issue further and to adopt a just solution.

I should like to end my statement by stressing that what really matters at present is preventing new conflicts and new wars and solving current ones by peaceful means. Here, preventive measures are the best formula. This will make arms control and disarmament an even higher priority and will make a significant contribution to strengthening international security and developing cooperative international relations. We therefore hope that in future the First Committee will be able to devote more time to international security matters.

Mr. Jele (South Africa): My delegation would like to congratulate you, Sir, upon your assumption of the important office of Chairman of the First Committee at the fiftieth session of the General Assembly. I would also like to pay tribute to your predecessor, Ambassador Luis Valencia Rodriguez of Ecuador, who guided us through our work at the forty-ninth session. We also wish to extend our congratulations to the other officers elected to important posts in the First Committee. The Chairman, the members of his Bureau and the Secretariat can count on my delegation's support and cooperation in the fulfilment of their duties.

Disarmament and non-proliferation have been a focus of attention for the international community during 1995. This is largely due to the attention given to the negotiations for a comprehensive test-ban treaty and the Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). The decision to award the Nobel Peace Prize to Joseph Rotblat and the Pugwash Conferences on Science and World Affairs for the central role they have played in promoting the cause of nuclear disarmament is further evidence of this.

The NPT is the cornerstone of the international non-proliferation regime and is the foundation on which much of our work is based. When the NPT was adopted 25 years ago, it represented a major advance towards nuclear disarmament. The dramatic changes brought about by the end of the cold war have created a global environment in which it is possible to realize the NPT's basic objectives.

At the Review and Extension Conference, which was held here in New York during April and May, the NPT regime was reinforced by the adoption, without a vote, of the decisions on the strengthened review process and on the Principles and Objectives for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. The Principles and Objectives, especially those in the section dealing with nuclear disarmament, have a particular significance for the First Committee. In them it is noted that nuclear disarmament has been substantially facilitated by the easing of international tension and the strengthening of trust between States, factors which have prevailed since the end of the cold war. The States parties further undertook to fulfil with determination the NPT's nuclear disarmament undertakings, while the nuclear-weapon States also reaffirmed their commitment to negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to nuclear disarmament. The measures outlined in the programme of action of the Principles and Objectives are important for the full realization and effective implementation of article VI of the Treaty. As we all know, the programme of action entails the completion of the negotiations for a comprehensive test-ban treaty, the immediate commencement and early conclusion of negotiations on a cut-off convention, and the determined pursuit of nuclear, general and complete disarmament.

At the NPT Conference, and afterwards, a linkage was created between the indefinite extension of the Treaty, the strengthened review, and the principles and objectives. While this linkage might have been created by others for their own purposes, this was not the case in the proposal South Africa made to the Conference. In my delegation's view, the strengthened review and the Principles and Objectives were not intended as ends in themselves, nor were they intended as a compromise to achieve indefinite extension. They were intended as vehicles by means of which we could enter into a process leading to the achievement of the ultimate goals of the complete elimination of nuclear weapons and a treaty on general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control. If these decisions are to live up to their advance billing, then we will have to meet the original intentions, which were that the Principles and Objectives should be a yardstick by which all the States Parties could measure their non-proliferation and disarmament achievements; that they would be renewed periodically to ensure that they were dynamic and adapted to changing circumstances; and that they would be a lodestar which

would focus attention on the goals for which the States parties should strive.

The NPT Conference was also an important landmark on the way to our goal of achieving the universality of the nuclear non-proliferation regime. In this context, I should like to recall my Foreign Minister's words when he addressed the NPT Conference:

> "Apartheid South Africa, as a part of its national security policy, embarked on a nuclear-weapons programme. Democratic South Africa sees its international and regional security being achieved by complete nuclear disarmament. The NPT provides us in Africa and the international community with greater security than did the nuclear weapons which we have destroyed. Southern Africa until very recently was in a state of conflict, war and destabilization, and nuclear weapons were thought to be providing security. I believe that the South African experience — namely, that security is provided by nuclear disarmament rather than by nuclear proliferation — is a telling one, not only for the threshold States but also for the acknowledged weapon States."

At the Review and Extension Conference, the nuclear-weapon States also undertook to exercise utmost restraint with respect to nuclear testing, pending the successful conclusion of a comprehensive test-ban treaty. My Government is therefore particularly perturbed that two nuclear-weapon States have, despite the undertaking they helped to negotiate at that Conference and in disregard of international concern and appeals to desist, proceeded to test nuclear weapons. South Africa strongly urges the States concerned to reconsider their nuclear testing policy and to join a global moratorium on nuclear testing.

At the same time, we wish to commend other nuclear-weapon States for their continued restraint in this regard and strongly urge them to continue honouring their commitment to a moratorium. A cessation of all nuclear testing will provide a favourable climate for the negotiations at the Conference on Disarmament to conclude a comprehensive test-ban treaty before the end of 1996, as agreed in the principles and objectives.

South Africa takes great satisfaction at the progress that has been made with regard to the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone. The Organization of African Unity (OAU)/United Nations Group of Experts, which was very ably assisted by a member of the United Nations Disarmament Secretariat in Geneva, Mr. Sola Ogunbanwo, completed their task of preparing a text for the Treaty during a meeting in Johannesburg at the end of May. At the 62nd meeting of the Council of Ministers of the OAU, the Pelindaba text of the Treaty was adopted, on 23 June 1995. Africa attaches great importance to this Treaty, and the African Group will be submitting a resolution on the Treaty to the First Committee.

The Treaty is important, as it expands considerably the total area of nuclear-weapon-free zones and is a further step towards the final goal of complete nuclear disarmament. In this context, we also look forward to establishing cooperative arrangements with other nuclear-weapon-free zones in the southern hemisphere. Work should then begin on a treaty establishing Africa as a zone free of all weapons of mass destruction.

South Africa appeals to the nuclear-weapon States to give their support to the African treaty, and to ensure that the relevant protocols are signed as soon as they are available for signature. Here South Africa would also like to add its voice to the call on the nuclear-weapon States which have not yet signed the relevant Protocols of other nuclear-weapon-free zone treaties to do so as soon as possible. This would be a further step in the realization of the commitments which were undertaken at the NPT Conference, and will further strengthen the nuclear non-proliferation regime.

My country wishes to pay tribute to all those delegations which worked so hard in the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva to produce the current rolling text of the comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty. Immediately after the NPT Conference there was some concern that the work of the Conference on Disarmament was suffering from a post-NPT lethargy. The flexibility shown by many delegations, and especially the announcements by three nuclear-weapon States that they supported a truly comprehensive zero-yield nuclear-test ban was of fundamental importance to the work which has been done this year.

On the question of the scope of the treaty, the South African delegation at the Conference on Disarmament has made it clear that it favours a simple article based on article 1 of the partial test-ban Treaty. We do not think that a comprehensive test-ban treaty should include the concepts of peaceful nuclear explosions, safety tests or low-yield tests, all of which could be open to abuse, which could frustrate the purposes of a comprehensive test ban. South Africa sees a future treaty as an instrument both for non-proliferation and disarmament. Both these elements

must be reflected in the scope of a future comprehensive test-ban treaty. We therefore support the text of the "scope article", proposed by Australia, which is gaining widespread support in the Conference on Disarmament.

In the NPT Principles and Objectives, the States Parties to the Treaty decided that the completion by the Conference on Disarmament of the negotiations for a comprehensive test-ban treaty not later than 1996 was important in the full realization and effective implementation of article VI of the NPT. If this is to be achieved, it will then be necessary for the Conference on Disarmament to complete its work by the middle of next year so that the treaty can be available for signature during the General Assembly. It is vitally important that the deadline set in the Principles and Objectives should be strictly adhered to if we are to maintain the credibility of the nuclear non-proliferation regime and of the decisions taken at the NPT Conference.

My delegation also looks forward to the commencement of the negotiations for a convention prohibiting the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. We should like to pay tribute to Ambassador Shannon of Canada, whose tireless efforts led to agreement on a mandate for the establishment of an Ad Hoc Committee on a cut-off convention.

South Africa was probably one of the first States, at the end of the cold war, to cease production of fissile materials for weapons purposes when operations at its pilot enrichment plant were terminated early in 1990. Highly enriched uranium (HEU) had been produced at the plant for use as fuel in the production of isotopes as well as for nuclear weapons. The very same facility therefore produced HEU for both peaceful and military purposes, clearly illustrating the difficulties we can expect in verifying a "cut-off" convention. The plant has been regularly inspected by the International Atomic Energy Agency since November 1991 after South Africa acceded to the NPT and implemented a comprehensive safeguards agreement with the Agency.

In our opinion, the purpose of a cut-off convention would be to strengthen the international nuclear non-proliferation regime and to provide a prohibition on the production of nuclear material for weapons purposes through a binding legal and internationally verifiable commitment. The main undertakings in a "cut-off" convention would be: to terminate production operations and to refrain from any further production of fissile materials intended for explosive devices; to refrain from providing assistance in producing fissile materials for proscribed purposes to any other State; and to accept non-discriminatory international safeguards to verify these undertakings.

On 13 September 1995 South Africa became the thirty-seventh State party to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). The ratification of the CWC again underlines my Government's commitment to the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. South Africa strongly favours the early entry into force of this global disarmament agreement, which will ban an entire category of weapons of mass destruction.

As current Chairman of the Preparatory Commission for the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), South Africa's Ambassador to the Netherlands is taking active steps to encourage the ratification of the Convention. South Africa, together with many other States parties to this important disarmament treaty, firmly believes that ratification by the countries which have stockpiles of these weapons is important, because many States look to those countries to take the lead before depositing their own instruments of ratification.

South Africa is also participating in the work of the Ad Hoc Group of the States Parties to the Biological Weapons Convention which was established by the 1994 Special Conference of States Parties. The work which is being done in the Ad Hoc Group to strengthen the effectiveness and improve the implementation of the Treaty by, *inter alia*, establishing effective verification measures is a high priority for my Government and integral to its policy on disarmament and the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

South Africa also acceded to the inhumane weapons Convention on 13 September 1995. We believe that the universality of that Convention is an objective for which we should all strive and urge all States to accede to the Convention as soon as possible. South Africa's accession to the Convention emphasizes my Government's commitment to the elimination of the suffering which is caused by the scourge of war and other armed conflicts; to the promotion of international peace and security; and to our responsibility to implement arms control policies as a means to this end. South Africa has, for this reason, decided to extend its moratorium on the export of land-mines by the introduction of a permanent ban on the export or sale of long-lived anti-personnel land-mines. We regret that the Review Conference in Vienna was unable to achieve a revised

Protocol II and we call on all the States parties to work for a successful conclusion of the meeting when it is reconvened next year.

South Africa's Government of National Unity is also very concerned about the proliferation of other conventional arms. It is conventional weapons which are being used to create the devastation in Rwanda, Somalia, Afghanistan and the former Yugoslavia. The illicit transfer of arms is also of major concern in the southern African region. To address these concerns the South African Cabinet approved the draft of a new conventional arms control policy on 30 August 1995. A National Conventional Arms Control Committee has been established and will function in accordance with the guiding principles and criteria to ensure arms trade and transfers conform to accepted international practice.

During the forty-ninth session, the General Assembly adopted by consensus resolution 49/77 B on the expansion of the membership of the Conference on Disarmament. In that resolution the Assembly recalled the report of the Special Coordinator for membership designated by the Conference, Ambassador O'Sullivan of Australia, and the subsequent statement made by the Special Coordinator on 26 August 1993, recommending a dynamic solution to the question of membership. The Conference on Disarmament was also urged by the General Assembly to make every effort to reach a solution resulting, by the beginning of 1995, in a significant expansion of its composition, which would include at least 60 countries.

South Africa believed that resolution 49/77 B was particularly important because the Conference on Disarmament is the only forum of the international community for the negotiation of multilateral disarmament treaties. It is therefore essential that its composition reflect present-day realities and not the bygone divisions of the cold war.

Some progress has been made in the implementation of the resolution through the untiring efforts of Ambassador Benjelloun of Morocco, the current President of the Conference on Disarmament. The decision which has now been taken by the Conference merely adopts the O'Sullivan report on the composition of the Conference while stating only that the new members will assume membership at the earliest possible date, which is still to be decided by the Conference. The South African Government calls on the Conference on Disarmament to implement its decision of 21 September 1995 on the expansion of membership by the beginning of its next session in January 1996.

Mr. Pibulsonggram (Thailand): On behalf of the delegation of Thailand and as a colleague of yours here, I wish to congratulate you most warmly, Sir, on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee. I am confident that, under your able guidance, the work of the First Committee will be fruitful and successful. It is with this confidence that I should like to assure you of my delegation's readiness to render its full cooperation to you and the other members of the Bureau in our undertakings during the next few months.

In this connection, I should also like to express my deepest appreciation for the capable manner in which your predecessor, Ambassador Luis Valencia Rodriguez of Ecuador, presided over the Committee last year. Under the leadership of Ambassador Rodriguez, notable progress was achieved by the First Committee and a sound basis provided for our work this year.

Since the last session, there have been mixed signals of encouraging and discouraging developments. In the realm of nuclear disarmament, we are witnessing progress in the efforts towards the implementation of START I, which entered into force in December 1994; brighter prospects for the ratification of START II; the conclusion of START III; renewed enthusiasm in the ongoing negotiations on a comprehensive test-ban treaty; and, of course, the conclusion of the Review and Extension Conference of the States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). On the other hand, we are also witnessing disappointing developments, such as the continued existence of a nuclear threat against humanity, the resumption of nuclear tests by nuclear-weapon States and the apparent possibility of nuclear proliferation to other non-nuclear-weapon States and groups of peoples who seek to obtain their political objectives through violent means.

As a non-nuclear State party to the NPT, Thailand is particularly disappointed and saddened by the decision of nuclear-weapon States to resume nuclear testing, in defiance of world public opinion, in the very year in which the NPT has been extended indefinitely. In May 1995, the international community decided to adopt, without a vote, the indefinite extension of the NPT at the urging of nuclear-weapon States themselves, in the expectation that this decision would help remove the shadow of the nuclear threat which has loomed over the peoples of this planet for the past 50 years.

For my delegation, the nuclear tests, all of which happened to take place in the Asia-Pacific region, clearly

violate the spirit of the NPT and the decision of the NPT Review Conference on Principles and Objectives for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. Thailand wishes to join all others that have urged these nuclear-weapon States to observe the global moratorium on nuclear testing. My delegation would also appreciate any service that other nuclear- weapon States could render in reversing the situation. In this connection, my delegation would like to appeal to all nuclear-weapon States to live up to their Treaty obligations, particularly those provided by Article VI of the NPT, and to work towards the complete elimination of nuclear weapons.

As a member of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), Thailand firmly believes that all efforts should be made to alleviate and eventually eliminate the nuclear threat. For this reason, since the early 1980s, as a contribution to global efforts, my country and its fellow ASEAN members have been working towards the establishment of a South-East Asian nuclear-weapon-free zone. In recent years, remarkable progress has been achieved and it is hoped that the treaty on such a nuclear-weapon-free zone will soon be completed and be ready for signature at the fifth ASEAN Summit Meeting in Thailand in December this year.

Despite the desire of the world community to see the complete elimination of chemical weapons, these inhumane weapons of mass destruction still exist and continue to be developed so that they can inflict greater harm and suffering on the human race. The recent gas attack against innocent subway commuters in Tokyo proved that these abhorrent weapons can be as effective in battlefields as they are in the very heart of a cosmopolitan city. No one is safe from their destructive power. It is for this reason that Thailand is in full support of an effective and universal Chemical Weapons Convention. Thailand believes that, given the necessary political will and support, the Convention will be able to bring us a step closer to a world without chemical weapons. In this connection, I am pleased to inform this meeting that, at present, steps are being taken in my own country, Thailand, to ratify the Convention, after which we would join with others in anticipating its early implementation.

In a related area, Thailand welcomes the important decision of the Special Conference of the States Parties to the Biological Weapons Convention in 1994 to establish an Ad Hoc Group to consider appropriate means to strengthen the Convention, including possible verification measures. Thailand welcomes this important step, provided that the work of the Ad Hoc Group and the implementation of the Convention take into account the need to protect sensitive commercial proprietary information and the legitimate national security needs of individual countries.

One way that we can facilitate and assist the process of disarmament is to disseminate information on disarmament as widely as possible in order to promote public awareness of the need for disarmament. In this connection, my delegation is in full support of the United Nations disarmament campaign and related activities, as well as the work of the United Nations Regional Centres for Peace and Disarmament in various parts of the world. In particular, Thailand appreciates the initiatives, programmes and activities for peace and disarmament provided by the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific, with its headquarters in Kathmandu. Over the years, the activities of the Centre have helped to promote and encourage the development of effective confidence-building measures and have greatly facilitated the function of the United Nations in the area of the maintenance of international peace and security. Thailand would like to pledge its continued support and willingness to participate in the ongoing important work carried out by the Centre.

Thailand wishes to re-emphasize that, in the area of conventional arms disarmament, openness and transparency in the transfer of these weapons are greatly needed. In 1991, Thailand was one of the 150 Member States to vote in support of resolution 46/36 L on transparency in armaments. Since 1994, Thailand has been providing information to the United Nations Conventional Arms Register in accordance with that resolution. My delegation is confident that only the universal and non-discriminatory application of this regime will result in a more transparent and truly global disarmament in conventional arms.

It has been over a decade that Thailand, as a neighbour to a country at war, has had to confront the uncontrollable menace of land mines and their devastating and crippling effects. These lethal and destructive weapons have not only caused the loss of life and property among the Thai population, but have also rendered unusable large areas of Thai territory. Through an intensive and continuous mine clearance programme, the situation has greatly improved. However, much remains to be done before the problem can be completely solved.

As a land mine-affected country, Thailand does not manufacture or export land mines. My delegation therefore support relevant United Nations resolutions on assistance in mine clearance and the moratorium on the export of

anti-personnel mines. We also note with appreciation the efforts of the United Nations in drawing up a comprehensive mine clearance programme, in launching mine awareness activities, and, more importantly, in establishing the United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund for land mine-affected countries. My delegation, however, would like to emphasize that international assistance for this purpose should be non-selective and be obtainable by all countries and peoples who are victims of land-mines.

The dramatic increase in the number of conflicts and disputes in various parts of the world during the past few years has posed a new challenge to the ability of United Nations peace-keeping operations and multilateral efforts to maintain international peace and security. My delegation is convinced that, in order to enable the United Nations and the international community to meet this challenge, new thinking on the role of United Nations peace-keeping operations should be developed. Consideration should be given to the practicality, usefulness, and cost-effectiveness of each operation.

My delegation also believes that regional cooperation could do much to complement and assist global efforts in conflict resolution, conflict prevention, and confidence-building. Because of this belief, in 1994 Thailand and the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) created the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) with the aim of promoting peace and security for the Asia-Pacific region. As a consultative forum involving 18 countries from the Asia-Pacific region and the European Union, the ARF has increasingly proved to be a useful vehicle for confidence-building in the area and has served as a viable model for regional political cooperation. At its second meeting in Brunei Darussalam in August this year, in particular, the importance of concepts such as amity and cooperation in South-East Asia, peace and cooperation in the South China Sea and the creation of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in South-East Asia were emphasized. Thailand hopes that, in the years ahead, the participants in the ARF will continue to build on these concepts in order to help ensure a more stable, secure and peaceful Asia-Pacific region, thus contributing to United Nations efforts at the global level.

Much has been accomplished during the past year. Yet, much remains to be done in the area of international peace and security at this session of the General Assembly and beyond. As we are celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, my delegation believes that this current session provides us with an excellent opportunity not only to re-examine the successes and failures of the United Nations in the areas of general and complete disarmament and the strengthening of international peace and security, but also to renew our commitment to the goals and objectives of United Nations efforts in these areas.

The Chairman: I have received a request from two delegations to speak in exercise of their right of reply.

I should point out that the rules regarding rights of reply that were invoked yesterday will continue to apply.

Mrs. Bourgois (France) *(interpretation from French)*: Several delegations have referred to the question of nuclear tests. One did so in unacceptable language. These statements prompt the French delegation to place the last series of tests carried out by France in the framework of the final and complete ban on nuclear tests. Our purpose is, as soon as possible in 1996, to achieve the conclusion of a treaty that would ban all nuclear-weapons tests or any other nuclear explosion.

The major problem is the scope of such a treaty. As members know, France was the first to announce, on 10 August last at the Conference on Disarmament, that we endorse this objective and this formulation. This choice is a matter of extreme importance. It is the choice of the zero option.

The attacks levelled at France are unfounded. Contrary to what some have said, this campaign is entirely in accordance with the law and with the commitments undertaken by France. The extreme restraint that we have displayed signifies neither interdiction nor suspension, and we have never excluded the possibility of completing this series of tests.

Furthermore, France is carrying out the minimum number of tests strictly required for the security and viability of its weaponry, as with the independent acquisition of simulation technology. We include non-proliferation among the priorities of our international activities, and it is in this spirit that we actively strove for the unconditional and unlimited extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) in 1995.

Finally, France reaffirms its attachment to the ultimate objective of nuclear disarmament, to which it has subscribed, in particular in the context of article VI of the NPT. We have taken major unilateral measures to reduce our arsenal, which are all the more important in that, as

everyone knows, this arsenal is maintained at the level of strict sufficiency by comparison with others.

In conclusion, I should like to note that certain delegations have referred to the scenario of an immediate cessation of tests. This leads the French delegation to emphasize that such a scenario for the immediate -- I stress, immediate -- cessation of tests could not be applied to France. Lastly, this recent campaign was necessary for the signing of a treaty, which we hope to conclude next autumn, that would ban nuclear tests. That seems to be the common objective sought by the General Assembly.

Mr. Stephanou (Greece): I did not wish to speak on a point of order so as not to interrupt the statement made today by the delegation of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. That is why I am availing myself of my delegation's right of reply.

In connection with the incorrect naming of the State in question used in that statement, I should like to recall Security Council resolution 817 (1993), according to which that State was admitted to the United Nations,

> "being provisionally referred to for all purposes within the United Nations, as 'the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia' pending settlement of the difference that has arisen over the name of the State" *(resolution 817 (1993), para. 2)*.

This difference has not yet been settled.

Mr. Calovski (the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia): Before I reply to the statement of the representative of Greece, I should like to stress that the relations between the Republic of Macedonia and Greece have begun to develop very satisfactorily for both sides. Everything indicates that in future they will be very fruitful. I take pleasure in noting such a positive situation developing between our countries and in the southern part of the Balkans.

The interpretation of Security Council resolution 817 (1993) by the representative of Greece is not correct. Resolution 817 (1993) makes no mention of the name of my country or of any obligation by my Government to use the reference mentioned in that resolution. There is no decision by any United Nations organ or any other international organ that obliges us not to use our constitutional name. We are doing this now and will be doing the same in future. As a matter of fact, we will always use our constitutional name, which is, as members know, the Republic of Macedonia.

Mr. Stephanou (Greece): The representative of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia has given his own interpretation. I should like to mention that there is no question of interpreting Security Council resolution 817 (1993), as its text is self-explanatory. If it were interpreted to imply that the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia could be referred to otherwise, the resolution would have been devoid of any meaning.

Mr. Calovski (the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia): I should just like to repeat that in my statement, I used the name of my country, which is the Republic of Macedonia. As I mentioned earlier, Security Council resolution 817 (1993) does not oblige us not to use our constitutional name. The situation is clear. If we would like to complicate it, we can.

The meeting rose at 5.05 p.m.